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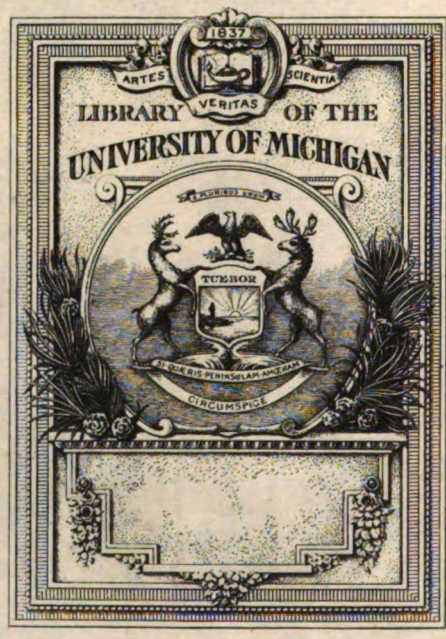
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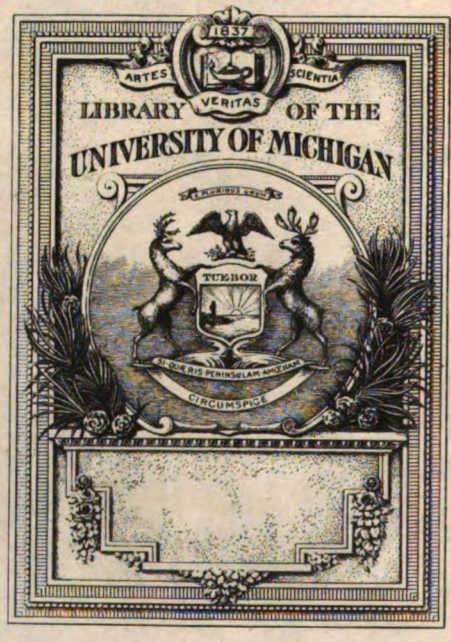
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THE

# STRAND MAGAZINE

## An Illustrated Monthly

Vol. LXXI

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56

*. . Frankau.* 536

*Arnold Bennett.* 327

. . . . . 34

*Maurice Tate.* 472

. . . . . *Cecil Parkin.* 611

# INDEX.


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| ACROSTICS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 43, 138, 311, 397, 479, | | 600 |
| "ALL'S FAIR——" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Roland Pertwee.* | 427 |
| Illustrations by Conrad Leigh. | | |
| "——AND FRIENDLESS" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Mabel Gibson.* | 75 |
| Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills. | | |
| ANDREWS, C. C. | | |
| "FIRE!" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 405 |
| ANSWER HIS OWN CHILD, IT'S A WISE FATHER WHO CAN .. | *Chester T. Crowell.* | 97 |
| AUMONIER, STACY. | | |
| THE ROOM .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 200 |
| FUNERAL MARCH .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 299 |
| AUSTRALIAN CRICKET AND SPECTATORS .. .. .. .. .. | *Maurice Tate.* | 472 |
| Illustrations by "Rip." | | |
| BATEMAN, H. M. | | |
| THE HUMORIST—AN EXPOSURE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 196 |
| BED CASES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *W. W. Jacobs.* | 211 |
| Illustrations by Will Owen. | | |
| BEESTON, L. J. | | |
| THE THOUSAND-POUND EMERALD .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 356 |
| BELL, J. J. | | |
| THE PURSE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 218 |
| BENNETT, ARNOLD. | | |
| DEATH, FIRE, AND LIFE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 241 |
| CLARIBEL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 327 |
| BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS .. .. .. .. .. .. | *F. G. L. Fairlie.* | 150 |
| Illustrations by E. F. Sherie. | | |
| BIT OF LUCK FOR MABEL, A .. .. .. .. .. .. | *P. G. Wodehouse.* | 44 |
| Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver. | | |
| BLIND, HOW IT FEELS TO BE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *J. Macrae.* | 261 |
| Illustrations by Tom Peddie, and from Photographs. | | |
| BOSSCACKLE TWINS, THE .. .. .. .. .. | *Horace Annesley Vachell.* | 64 |
| Illustrations by Charles Crombie. | | |
| CAINE, SIR HALL. | | |
| WHEN I WAS YOUNG—II. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 15 |
| CAREER, THE CHOICE OF A: "WHAT SHALL I BE?" | | |
| I.—BUSINESS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Alfred Salmon.* | 496 |
| II.—THE STAGE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *J. M. Glover.* | 503 |
| III.—THE CHURCH .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *The Bishop of London.* | 505 |
| IV.—THE BAR .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Sir Ernest Wild.* | 576 |
| V.—BANKING .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *O. E. E. Wood.* | 580 |
| VI.—THE METROPOLITAN POLICE .. .. | *Brigadier-General Sir W. T. F. Horwood.* | 583 |
| Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd and Tom Peddie, and from Photographs. | | |
| "CELL OF PURE DREAMS, THE" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 56 |
| OF D'ANNUNZIO, THE GREAT ITALIAN POET AND PATRIOT. | | |
| Illustrations from Photographs. | | |
| CITY OF COURAGE, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Gilbert Frankau.* | 536 |
| Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd. | | |
| CLARIBEL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | *Arnold Bennett.* | 327 |
| Illustrations by F. Matania, R.I. | | |
| CLARKE, LAURENCE. | | |
| THE GREAT BARDOLPH .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | | 34 |
| CRICKET AND SPECTATORS, AUSTRALIAN .. .. .. .. | *Maurice Tate.* | 472 |
| Illustrations by "Rip." | | |
| CRICKET: THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TEST MATCHES .. .. .. | *Cecil Parkin.* | 611 |

PAGE

CROMPTON, RICHMAL.
AN EVENTFUL DAY IN THE LIFE OF MISS FAVERSHAM .. .. .. .. .. 508

CROWELL, CHESTER T.
IT'S A WISE FATHER WHO CAN ANSWER HIS OWN CHILD .. .. .. .. 97

D'ANNUNZIO, "THE CELL OF PURE DREAMS" OF .. .. .. .. .. 56

"DAYS OF MY LIFE" .. .. .. .. .. *H. Rider Haggard.* 315, 440, 547
Illustrations by Tom Peddie and Frank Wiles, and from Photographs.

DEATH, FIRE, AND LIFE .. .. .. .. .. .. *Arnold Bennett.* 241
Illustrations by C. E. Brock, R.I.

DO "COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE"—
IN DREAMS OR PREMONITIONS? .. .. .. .. *Sir Oliver Lodge.* 377
Illustrations by Tom Peddie.

DOWN-AND-OUTER, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. *Gerald Villiers Stuart.* 119
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.

DOYLE, A. CONAN.
THE LAND OF MIST; OR, THE QUEST OF EDWARD MALONE .. .. 25, 139, 285

DOYLE, LYNN.
"SMOKE" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 598

DRAKE THE MAGNIFICENT .. .. .. .. .. .. *Albert Kinross.* 92
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd.

DUDENEY, HENRY E.
PERPLEXITIES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 103, 208, 312, 416, 521, 628
THE PUZZLE KING: AN INTERVIEW WITH .. .. .. .. .. .. 398

ENGLISH FILTER, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. *C. E. Bechhofer Roberts.* 251
Illustrations by John Campbell.

EVANS, C.B., D.S.O., R.N., CAPTAIN E. R. G. R.
WHEN I WAS YOUNG .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 234

EVENTFUL DAY IN THE LIFE OF MISS FAVERSHAM, AN .. *Richmal Crompton.* 508
Illustrations by E. G. Oakdale.

FAIRLIE, F. G. L.
BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 150

FATHER WHO CAN ANSWER HIS OWN CHILD, IT'S A WISE. *Chester T. Crowell.* 97
Illustrations from Drawings and a Photograph.

FEMININE" IN HUMOUR, "THE ETERNAL .. .. .. .. .. .. 295
Illustrations from Drawings.

"FIRE!" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *C. C. Andrews.* 405
Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.

FRANKAU, GILBERT.
THE CITY OF COURAGE. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 536

FUNERAL MARCH .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 299
Illustrations by F. Matania, R.I.

GARDENER, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Rudyard Kipling.* 419
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

GARDNER, MADELINE.
THE LEGACY .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 392

GIBSON, MABEL.
"—— AND FRIENDLESS" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 75

GLOVER, J. M.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" THE STAGE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 503

GREAT BARDOLPH, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. *Laurence Clarke.* 34
Illustrations by Leo Bates.

HAGGARD, H. RIDER.
"DAYS OF MY LIFE" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 315, 440, 547

HANOUM, MELEK.
HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE HAREM AND HOW I BECAME A DRESSMAKER .. .. .. 129

HAREM AND HOW I BECAME A DRESSMAKER, HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE
Told by *Melek Hanoum.* 129
Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.

PAGE

HASTINGS, B. MACDONALD.
THE SEASON TICKET .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 451

HORWOOD, BRIG.-GEN. SIR W. T. F.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" THE METROPOLITAN POLICE. .. .. .. .. .. 583

HUMORIST, THE—AN EXPOSURE .. .. .. .. .. *H. M. Bateman.* 196
Illustrations from Drawings by the Author.

IN CONFIDENCE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *W. H. Williamson.* 619
Illustrations by J. M. Faulks.

INFERIORITY COMPLEX OF OLD SIPPY, THE .. .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 366
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE RUSSIAN .. .. .. .. *H. de Vere Stacpoole.* 384
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

JACOBS, W. W.
BED CASES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 211

JAMES JAMES.. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Barry Pain.* 345
Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik.

KEEPING IN WITH VOSPER .. .. .. .. .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 267
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

KINROSS, ALBERT.
DRAKE THE MAGNIFICENT .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 92
ORPHAN ANNIE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 557

KIPLING, RUDYARD.
THE PROPAGATION OF KNOWLEDGE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 3
THE GARDENER .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 419

KNOBLOCK, EDWARD.
THE T'ANG MIRROR .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 562

LAND OF MIST, THE; OR, THE QUEST OF EDWARD MALONE. *A. Conan Doyle.* 25, 139, 285
Illustrations by F. E. Hiley.

LEGACY, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Madeline Gardner.* 392
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

LEVEL BUSINESS HEAD, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 461
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

LODGE, SIR OLIVER.
DO "COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE"—IN DREAMS OR PREMONITIONS? 377

LONDON, THE BISHOP OF.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" THE CHURCH .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 505

LORD EMSWORTH ACTS FOR THE BEST .. .. .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 525
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

MACRAE, J.
HOW IT FEELS TO BE BLIND .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 261

MALLOCH, G. R.
THE ROSE CAVALIERS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 227

MINISTERING ANGEL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Roland Pertwee.* 336
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS, AND MADELON .. *E. Phillips Oppenheim.*
No. 9.—THE GAS WIZARD .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 82
No. 10.—CHRISTIAN THE CONCIERGE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 174
Illustrations by S. Abbey.

MR. POTTER TAKES A REST CURE .. .. .. .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 107
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

MUIR, AUGUSTUS.
THE REPTILE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 487
T.T. TEA, LTD. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 601

NICHOLAS OF GREECE, PRINCE.
REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 350

OPPENHEIM, E. PHILLIPS.
MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS, AND MADELON.
No. 9.—THE GAS WIZARD .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 82
No. 10.—CHRISTIAN THE CONCIERGE .. .. .. .. .. .. 174

PAGE

ORPHAN ANNIE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Albert Kinross.* 557
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd.

PAIN, BARRY.
TALENT AND GENIUS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 307
JAMES JAMES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 345
RESTING .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 517

PARKIN, CECIL.
THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TEST MATCHES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 611

PERPLEXITIES .. .. .. .. *Henry E. Dudeney.* 103, 208, 312, 416, 521, 628

PERTWEE, ROLAND.
A TRIAL RUN .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 185
MINISTERING ANGEL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 336
"ALL'S FAIR——" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 427

PHILIPS, AUSTIN.
THE WOMAN WHO FOUND WHAT SHE HAD LOST .. .. .. .. .. .. 480

PREMONITIONS, DO "COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE"—IN DREAMS OR? .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Sir Oliver Lodge.* 377

PROPAGATION OF KNOWLEDGE, THE .. .. .. .. *Rudyard Kipling.* 3
Illustrations by C. E. Brock, R.I.

PURSE, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *J. J. Bell.* 218
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd.

PUZZLE KING, THE:
AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. HENRY E. DUDENEY .. .. .. .. .. .. 398
Illustrations from Diagrams and a Photograph.

PUZZLES WITH THE CHRISTMAS DESSERT, SOLUTIONS TO .. .. .. .. 104

REGIMENTAL MARCHES, ROMANTIC .. .. .. .. .. .. *Walter Wood.* 278
Illustrations by W. B. Wollen.

REMINISCENCES AND INTERVIEWS.
CAINE, SIR HALL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 15
DUDENEY, HENRY E. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 398
EVANS, CAPTAIN E. R. G. R. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 234
HAGGARD, H. RIDER .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 315, 440, 547
HANOUM, MELEK .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 129
NICHOLAS OF GREECE, PRINCE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 350
PARKIN, CECIL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 611
TATE, MAURICE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 472

REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS .. .. .. .. *Prince Nicholas of Greece* 350
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd, and from a Photograph.

REPTILE, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Augustus Muir.* 487
Illustrations by Conrad Leigh.

RESTING .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Barry Pain.* 517
Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik.

ROBERTS, C. E. BECHHOFER.
THE ENGLISH FILTER .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 251

ROOM, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 200
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

ROSE CAVALIERS, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *G. R. Malloch* 227
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

SALMON, ALFRED.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" BUSINESS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 496

"SAPPER" (H. C. McNEILE).
TOUCH AND GO .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 157

SEASON TICKET, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. *B. Macdonald Hastings.* 451
Illustrations by Norman Sutcliffe.

SHERIE, FENN.
"ZEEBRUGGE"—THE FULL STORY OF A WONDER-FILM TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME 166

"SMOKE" .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Lynn Doyle.* 598
Illustrations by Arthur Watts.

STACPOOLE, H. DE VERE.
IN THE HOUSE OF THE RUSSIAN .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 384

PAGE

STUART, GERALD VILLIERS.
THE DOWN-AND-OUTER .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 119

TALENT AND GENIUS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Barry Pain.* 307
Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik.

T'ANG MIRROR, THE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Edward Knoblock.* 562
Illustrations by E. F. Sherie.

TATE, MAURICE.
AUSTRALIAN CRICKET AND SPECTATORS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 472

TEST MATCHES, THE LIGHTER SIDE OF .. .. .. .. .. *Cecil Parkin.* 611
Illustrations by "Rip."

THOUSAND-POUND EMERALD, THE .. .. .. .. .. *L. J. Beeston.* 356
Illustrations by S. H. Vedder.

TOUCH AND GO .. .. .. .. .. .. "*Sapper*" (*H. C. McNeile*). 157
Illustrations by H. Forster.

TREASURE TROVE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Horace Annesley Vachell.* 587
Illustrations by S. Briault.

TRIAL RUN, A .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Roland Pertwee.* 185
Illustrations by L. G. Illingworth.

T.T. TEA, LTD. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Augustus Muir.* 601
Illustrations by L. G. Illingworth.

VACHELL, HORACE ANNESLEY.
THE BOSSCACKLE TWINS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 64
TREASURE TROVE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 587

"WHAT SHALL I BE?" THE CHOICE OF A CAREER.
*Edited by J. A. R. Cairns.*
I.—BUSINESS .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *Alfred Salmon.* 496
II.—THE STAGE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *J. M. Glover.* 503
III.—THE CHURCH .. .. .. .. .. *The Bishop of London.* 505
IV.—THE BAR .. .. .. .. .. .. *Sir Ernest E. Wild.* 576
V.—BANKING .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. *O. E. E. Wood.* 580
VI.—THE METROPOLITAN POLICE .. .. *Brigadier-General Sir W. T. F. Horwood.* 583
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd and Tom Peddie, and from Photographs.

WILD, SIR ERNEST E.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" THE BAR .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 576

WILLIAMSON, W. H.
IN CONFIDENCE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 619

WODEHOUSE, P. G.
A BIT OF LUCK FOR MABEL .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 41
MR. POTTER TAKES A REST CURE .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 107
KEEPING IN WITH VOSPER .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 267
THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX OF OLD SIPPY .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 366
THE LEVEL BUSINESS HEAD .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 461
LORD EMSWORTH ACTS FOR THE BEST .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 525

WOMAN WHO FOUND WHAT SHE HAD LOST, THE .. .. *Austin Philips.* 480
Illustrations by John Campbell.

WOOD, O. E. E.
"WHAT SHALL I BE?" BANKING .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 580

WOOD, WALTER.
ROMANTIC REGIMENTAL MARCHES .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 278

YOUNG, WHEN I WAS.
No. X.—SIR HALL CAINE. Part II. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 15
Illustrations by Tom Peddie, and from Photographs.
No. XI.—CAPTAIN E. R. G. R. EVANS, C.B., D.S.O., R.N. .. .. .. .. 234
Illustrations by H. M. Brock, and from Photographs.

"ZEEBRUGGE"—THE FULL STORY OF A WONDER-FILM
TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME .. .. .. .. .. .. *Fenn Sherie.* 166
Illustrations from Photographs.

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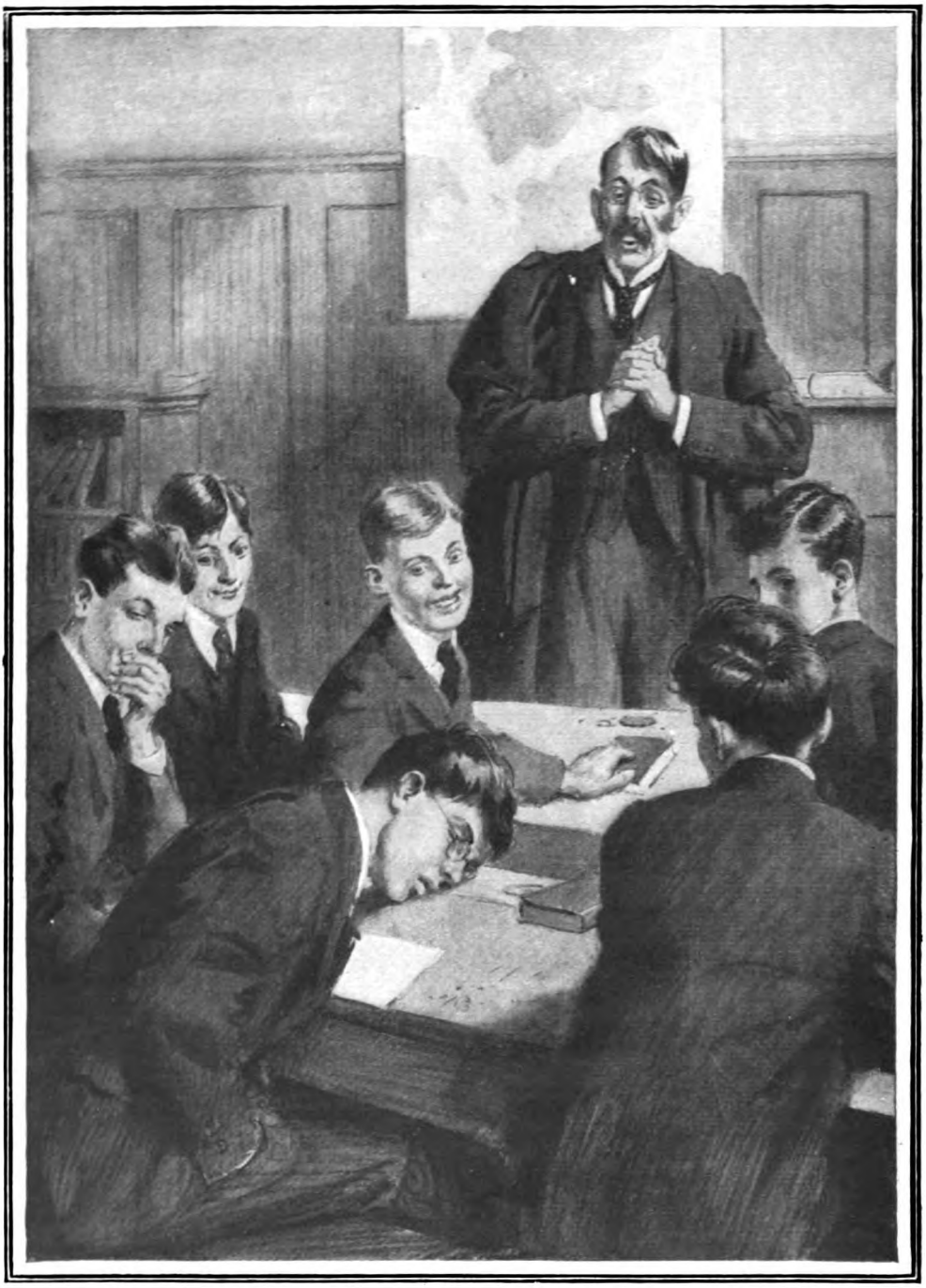

AT THIS POINT BEETLE'S NODDING BROWS CAME DOWN WITH A GRUNT ON THE DESK MR KING RUBBED HIS HANDS AND BEGAN TO CARVE HIM.

*(See page 3.)*

# THE PROPAGATION OF KNOWLEDGE

By

## RUDYARD KIPLING

*ILLUSTRATED BY C. E. BROCK R.I*

THE Army Class "English," which included the Upper Fifth, was trying to keep awake, for "English" (Augustan epoch) came at last lesson, and that, on a blazing July afternoon, meant after everyone had been bathing. Even Mr. King found it hard to fight against the snore of the tide along the Pebble Ridge, and spurred himself with strong words.

Since, said he, the pearls of English Literature existed only to be wrenched from their settings and cast before young swine rooting for marks, it was his loathed business—in anticipation of the Army Preliminary Examination which, as usual, would be held at the term's end, under the auspices of an official examiner sent down *ad hoc*—to prepare for the Form a General Knowledge test-paper, which he would give them next week. It would cover their studies up to date of the Augustans and "King Lear," which was the selected—and strictly expurgated—Army play for that year. Now, English Literature, as he might have told them, was *not* divided into water-tight compartments, but flowed like a river. For example, Samuel Johnson, glory of the Augustans and no mean commentator of Shakespeare, was but one of a mighty procession which——

At this point Beetle's nodding brows came down with a grunt on the desk. He had been soaking and sunning himself in the open sea-baths built out on the rocks under the cliffs, from two-fifteen to four-forty.

The Form took Johnson off their minds. With any luck, Beetle would last King till the tea-bell. King rubbed his hands and began to carve him. He had gone to sleep to show his contempt (a) for Mr. King, who might or might not matter, and (b) for the Augustans, who, none the less, were not to be sneered at by one whose vast and omnivorous reading, for which such extraordinary facilities had been granted (this was because the Head had allowed Beetle the run of his library), naturally overlooked such *epigonoi* as Johnson, Swift, Pope, Gray, and the like. Harrison Ainsworth and Marryat doubtless appealed——

Even so, Beetle, salt-encrusted all over except his spectacles, and steeped in delicious languors, was sliding back to sleep again, when "Taffy" Howell, the leading light of the Form, who knew his Marryat as well as Stalky did his Surtees, began in his patent, noiseless whisper: "'Allow me to observe—in the most delicate manner in the world—just to hint——'"

"Under pretext of studying literature, a desultory and unformed mind would naturally return, like the dog in Scripture——"

"'You're a damned trencher-scrapin', napkin-carryin', shillin'-seekin', up-an'-downstairs, etc.,'" Howell quoted.

Beetle squawked aloud in the sudden knowledge that King was the ancient and eternal Boatswain Chucks—later Count Shucksen—of "Peter Simple." He had never realized it before.

"Sorry, sir. I'm afraid I've been asleep, sir," he sputtered.

The shout of the Army Class diverted the storm. King was grimly glad that Beetle had condescended to honour them so far. Perhaps he would now lend his awakened


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ear to a summary of the externals of Dr. Johnson, as limned by Macaulay. And he read, with intention, that just historian's picture of a grotesque figure with untied shoe-strings, that twitched and grunted, gorged its food, bit its finger-nails, and neglected its ablutions. The Form hailed it as a speaking likeness of Beetle; nor were they corrected.

Then King implored him to vouchsafe his comrades one single fact connected with Dr. Johnson which might at any time have attached itself to what, for decency's sake, must, Mr. King supposed, be called his mind.

Beetle was understood to say that the only thing he could remember was in French.

"You add, then, the Gallic tongue to your accomplishments? The information plus the accent? 'Tis well! Admirable Crichton, proceed!"

And Beetle proceeded with the text of a Du Maurier drawing in a back-number of *Punch*:—

"*De tous ces défunts cockolores*
*Le moral Fénélon,*
*Michel Ange et Johnson*
(*Le Docteur*) *sont les plus awful bores.*"

To which Howell, wooingly, just above his breath:—

"'Oh, *won't* you come up, come up?'"

Result, as the tea-bell rang, one hundred lines, to be shown up at seven-forty-five that evening. This was meant to blast the pleasant summer interval between tea and prep. Howell, a favourite in "English" as well as Latin, got off; but the Army Class crashed in to tea with a new Limerick.

THE imposition was purely a matter of book-keeping, as far as Beetle was concerned; for it was his custom of rainy afternoons to fabricate a store of lines in anticipation of just these accidents. They covered such English verse as interested him at the moment, and helped to fix the stuff in his memory. After tea, then, he drew the required amount from his drawer in Number Five Study, thrust it into his pocket, went up to the Head's house, and settled himself in the big Outer Library where, ever since the Head had taken him off all mathematics, he did précis-work and French translation. Here he buried himself in a close-printed, thickish volume which had been his chosen browse for some time. A hideous account of a hanging, drawing, and quartering had first attracted him to it, but later he discovered the book ("Curiosities of Literature" was its name) full of the finest confused feedings—such as forgeries and hoaxes, Italian literary societies, religious and scholastic controversies of old when men (even that most dreary John Milton) slanged each other, not without dust and heat, in scandalous pamphlets; personal peculiarities of the great; and a hundred other fascinating inutilities. This evening he fell on a description of wandering, mad Elizabethan beggars known as Tom-a-Bedlams, with incidental references to Edgar, who plays at being a Tom-a-Bedlam in "Lear," but whom Beetle did not consider at all funny. Then, at the foot of a left-hand page, leaped out on him a verse—of incommunicable splendour, opening doors into inexplicable worlds—out of a song that Tom-a-Bedlams were supposed to sing. It ran:—

"*With a heart of furious fancies*
*Whereof I am commander,*
*With a burning spear and a horse of air*
*To the wilderness I wander.*
*With a knight of ghosts and shadows*
*I summoned am to tourney,*
*Ten leagues beyond the wide world's end—*
*Methinks it is no journey.*"

He sat, mouthing and staring before him, till the prep-bell rang and it was time to take his lines up to King's study and lay them, as hot from the press, in the impot-basket appointed. He carried his dreams on to Number Five. They knew the symptoms of old.

"Readin' again," said Stalky, like a wife welcoming her spouse from the pot-house.

"Look here, I've found out something ——" Beetle began. "Listen——"

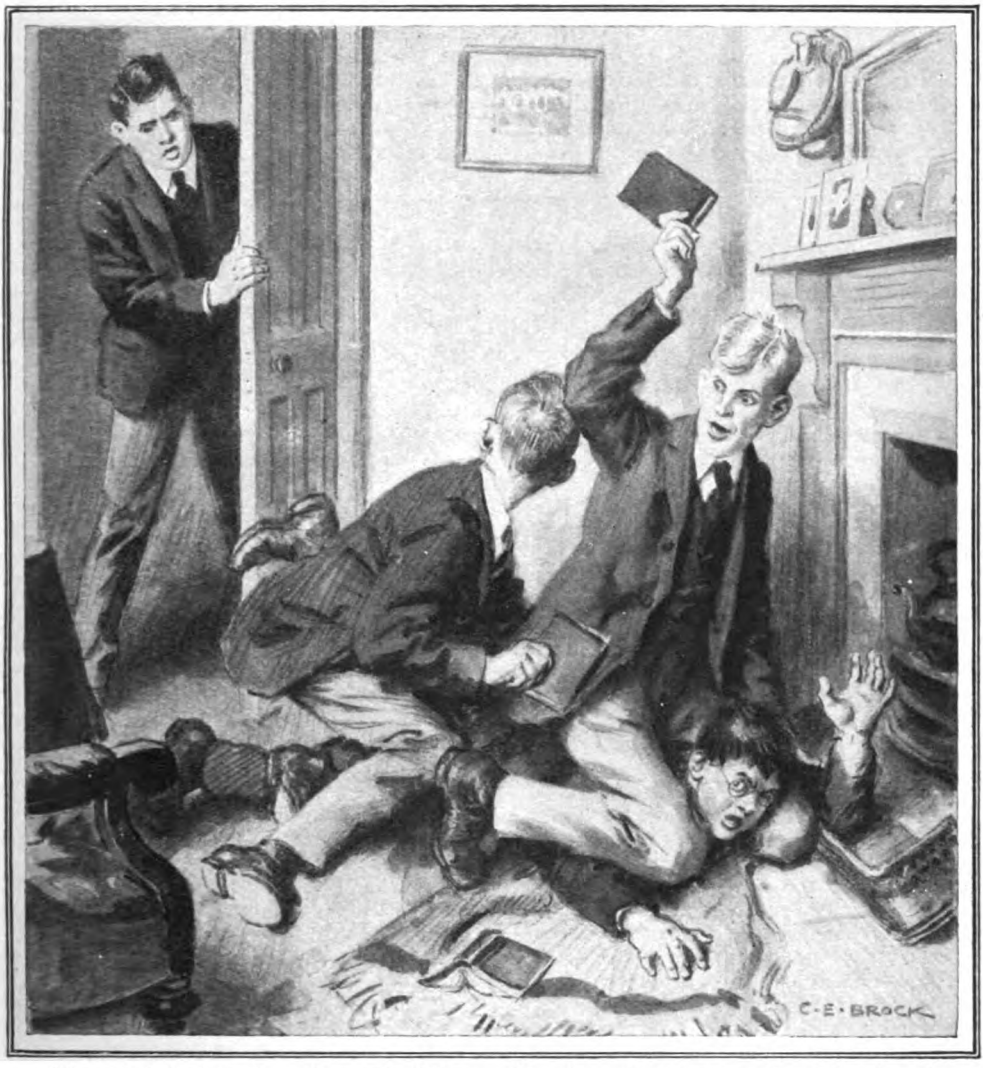
"No, you don't—till afterwards. It's Turkey's prep." This meant it was a Horace Ode through which Turkey would take them for a literal translation, and possible pitfalls. Stalky gave his business-like attention, but Beetle's eye was glazed and his mind adrift throughout, and he asked for things to be repeated. So when Turkey closed the Horace, justice began to be executed.

"I'm all right," he protested. "I swear I heard a lot what Turkey said. Shut up! Oh, shut *up! Do* shut up, you putrid asses." Beetle was speaking from the fender, his head between Turkey's knees, and Stalky largely over the rest of him.

"What's the metre of the beastly thing?" McTurk waved his Horace. "Look it up, Stalky. Twelfth of the Third."

"*Ionicum a minore,*" Stalky reported, closing his book in turn. "Don't let him forget it"; and Turkey's Horace marked the metre on Beetle's skull, with special attention to elisions. It hurt.

"'*Miserar' est neq' amori dare ludum neque dulci*
*Mala vino laver' aut' ex——*' King




**Howell dashed in from his study below. "Look *out!* If you make this infernal din we'll have someone up the staircase in a sec."**

likes 'mala' translated as 'chops,' not 'jaws.' (They were smitten.) Got it? You liar! You've no ear at all! Chorus, Stalky!"

Both Horaces strove to impart the measure, which was altogether different from its accompaniment. Presently Howell dashed in from his study below.

"Look *out!* If you make this infernal din we'll have someone up the staircase in a sec."

"We're teachin' Beetle Horace. He was goin' to burble us some muck he'd read," the tutors explained.

"'Twasn't muck! It was about those Tom-a-Bedlams in 'Lear.'"

"Oh!" said Stalky. "Why didn't you say so?"

"'Cause you didn't listen. They had drinkin'-horns an' badges, and there's a Johnson note on Shakespeare about the meanin' of Edgar sayin' 'My horn's dry.' But Johnson's dead wrong about it. Aubrey says——"

"Who's Aubrey?" Howell demanded. "Does King know about him?"

"Dunno. Oh, yes, an' Johnson started to learn Dutch after he was seventy."

"What the deuce for?" Stalky asked.

"For a change after his Dikker, I suppose," Howell suggested.

"And I looked up a lot of other

English stuff, too. I'm goin' to try it on King."

"Showin' off as usual," said the acid McTurk, who, like his race, lived and loved to destroy illusions.

"No; for a draw. He's an unjust dog! If you read, he says you're showin' off. If you don't, you're a mark-huntin' Philistine. What *does* he want you to do, curse him?"

"Shut up, Beetle!" Stalky pronounced. "There's more than draws in this. You've cribbed your maths off me ever since you came to Coll. You don't know what a cosine is, even *now*. Turkey does all your Latin."

"I like that! Who does both your *Picciolas?*"

"French don't count. It's time you began to work for your giddy livin' an' help us. *You* aren't goin' up for anythin' that matters. Play for your side, as Heffles says, or die the death! You don't want to die the death, again, do you? Now, let's hear about that stinkard Johnson swottin' Dutch. You're sure it was Sammivel, not Binjamin? You *are* so dam' inaccurate."

Beetle conducted an attentive class on the curiosities of literature for nearly a quarter of an hour. As Stalky pointed out, he promised to be useful.

THE Horace Ode next morning ran well, and "mala" duly translated as "chops" by Howell made King content. Then, in full feather, he sailed round the firmament at large, and, somehow, apropos to something or other, used the word "della Cruscan"—"if any of you have the faintest idea of its origin." Someone hadn't caught it correctly; which gave Beetle time enough to whisper "Bran—an' mills," to Howell, who said, promptly: "Hasn't it somethin' to do with mills—an' bran, sir?" King cast himself into poses of stricken wonder. "Oddly enough," said he, "it has."

They were then told a great deal about some silly Italian Academy of Letters which borrowed its office furniture and its titles from the equipment and staffing of mediæval flour-mills. And: "How has our Ap-Howell come by his knowledge?" Howell, being, indeed, Welsh, thought that it might have been something he had read in the holidays. King openly purred over him.

"If it had been *me*," Beetle observed while they were toying with sardines between lessons, "he'd ha' dropped on me for showin' off."

"See what we're savin' you from," Stalky answered. "I'm playin' Johnson, 'member, this afternoon."

That, too, came cleanly off the bat; and King was gratified by his interest in the Doctor's studies; but Stalky hadn't a ghost of a notion how he had come by the fact.

"Why didn't you say your father told you?" Beetle asked at tea.

"My-y Lord! Have you ever seen the guv'nor?" Stalky collapsed shrieking among the piles of bread and butter. "Well, look here. Taffy goes in to-morrow about those drinkin' horns an' Tom-a-Bedlams. You cut up to the library after tea, Beetle. You know what King's English papers are like. Look out useful stuff for answers an' we'll divvy at prep."

At prep, then, Beetle, loaded with assorted curiosities, made his forecast. He argued that there were bound to be a good many "what-do-you-know-abouts" those infernal Augustans. Pope was generally a separate item; but the odds were that Swift, Addison, Steele, Johnson, and Goldsmith would be lumped under one head. Dryden was possible, too, though rather outside the Epoch.

"Dryden. Oh! 'Glorious John!' Know that much, anyhow," Stalky vaunted.

"Then lug in Claude Halcro in the 'Pirate,'" Beetle advised. "He's always sayin' 'Glorious John.' King's a hog on Scott."

"No-o. I don't read Scott. You take this Hell Crow chap, Taffy."

"Right. What about Addison, Beetle?" Howell asked.

"Drank like a giddy fish."

"We all know that," chorused the gentle children.

"He said, 'See how a Christian can die'; an' he hadn't any conversation, 'cause someone or other——"

"Guessin' again, as usual," McTurk sneered. "*Who?*"

"Man called Mandeville—said he was a silent parson in a tie-wig."

"Right-ho! I'll take the silent parson with wig and 'purtenances. Taffy can have the dyin' Christian," Stalky decided.

Howell nodded, and resumed: "What about Swift, Beetle?"

"Died mad. Two girls. Saw a tree, an' said: 'I shall die at the top.' Oh, yes, an' his private amusements were 'ridiculous an' trivial.'"

Howell shook a wary head. "Don't know what that might let me in for with King. You can have it, Stalky."

"I'll take that," McTurk yawned. "King doesn't matter a curse to me, an' he knows it. 'Private amusements contemptible.'" He breathed all Ireland into the last perverted word.

"Right," Howell assented. "Bags I the dyin' tree, then."

"Cheery lot, these Augustans," Stalky

sighed. "'Any more of 'em been croakin' lately, Beetle?"

"My Hat!" the far-seeing Howell struck in. "King always gives us a stinker halfway down. What about Richardson—that 'Clarissa' chap, y'know?"

"I've found out lots about him," said Beetle, promptly. "He was the 'Shakespeare of novelists.'"

"King won't stand *that*. He says there's only one Shakespeare. 'Mustn't rot about Shakespeare to King," Howell objected.

"An' he was 'always delighted with his own works,'" Beetle continued.

"Like you," Stalky pointed out.

"Shut up. Oh, yes, an'——" he consulted some hieroglyphics on a scrap of paper—"the—the impassioned Diderot (dunno who *he* was) broke forth: 'O Richardson, thou singular genius!'"

Howell and Stalky rose together, each clamouring that he had bagged that first.

"I *must* have it!" Howell shouted. "King's never seen me breakin' forth with the impassioned Diderot. He's *got* to! Give me Diderot, you impassioned hound!"

"Don't upset the table. There's tons more. An' his genius was 'fertile and prodigal.'"

"All right! *I* don't mind bein' 'fertile and prodigal' for a change," Stalky volunteered. "King's going to enjoy this exam. If he was the Army Prelim chap we'd score."

"The Prelim questions will be pretty much like King's stuff," Beetle assured them.

"But it's always a score to know what your examiner's keen on," Howell said, and illustrated it with an anecdote. "'Uncle of mine stayin' with my people last holidays——"

"Your Uncle Diderot?" Stalky asked.

"No, you ass! Captain of Sappers. He told me he was up for a Staff exam. to an old Colonel-bird who believed that the English were the lost Tribes of Israel, or something like that. He'd written tons o' books about it."

"All Sappers are mad," said Stalky. "That's one of the things the guv'nor *did* tell me."

"Well, ne'er mind. My uncle played up, o' course. 'Said he'd always believed it, too. And so he got nearly top-marks for field-fortification. 'Didn't know a thing about it, either, he said."

"Good biznai!" said Stalky. "Well, go on, Beetle. What about Steele?"

"Can't I keep anything for myself?"

"Not *much!* King'll ask you where you got it from, and you'd show off, an' he'd find out. This ain't your silly English Literature, you ass. It's our marks. Can't you see that?"

Beetle very soon saw it was exactly as Stalky had said.

SOME days later a happy, and therefore not too likeable, King was explaining to the Reverend John in his own study how effort, zeal, scholarship, the humanities, and perhaps a little natural genius for teaching, could inspire even the mark-hunting minds of the young. His text was the result of his General Knowledge paper on the Augustans and "King Lear."

"Howell," he said, "I was *not* surprised at. He *has* intelligence. But, frankly, I did not expect young Corkran to burgeon. Almost one might believe he occasionally read a book."

"And McTurk too?"

"Yes. He had somehow arrived at a rather just estimate of Swift's lighter literary diversions. They *are* contemptible. And in the 'Lear' questions—they were all attracted by Edgar's character. Stalky had dug up something about Aubrey on Tom-a-Bedlams from some unknown source. Aubrey, of all people! I'm sure I only alluded to him once or twice."

"Stalky among the prophets of 'English'! And *he* didn't remember where he'd got it either?"

"No. Boys are amazingly purblind and limited. But if they keep this up at the Army Prelim, it is conceivable the Class may do itself credit. I told them so."

"I congratulate you. Ours is the hardest calling in the world, with the least reward. By the way, who are they likely to send down to examine us?"

"It rests between two, I fancy. Martlett—with me at Balliol—and Hume. They wisely chose the Civil Service. Martlett has published a brochure on Minor Elizabethan Verse—journeyman work, of course—enthusiasms, but no grounding. Hume I heard of lately as having infected himself in Germany with some Transatlantic abomination about Shakespeare and Bacon. He was Sutton." (The Head, by the way, was a Sutton man.)

King returned to the examination papers and read extracts from them, as mothers repeat the clever sayings of their babes.

"Here's old Taffy Howell, for instance—apropos to Diderot's eulogy of Richardson. 'The impassioned Diderot broke forth: "Richardson, thou singular genius!"'"

It was the Reverend John who stopped himself just in time from breaking forth. He recalled that, some days ago, he had heard Stalky on the stairs of Number Five, hurling the boots of many fags at Howell's door

and bidding "the impassioned Diderot" within "break forth" at his peril.

"Odd," said he, gravely, when his pipe drew again. "Where did Diderot say that?"

"I've forgotten for the moment. Taffy told me he'd picked it up in the course of holiday reading."

"Possibly. One never knows what heifers the young are ploughing with. Oh! How did Beetle do?"

"The necessary dates and his handwriting defeated him, I'm glad to say. I cannot accuse myself of having missed any opportunity of castigating that boy's inordinate and intolerable self-conceit. But I'm afraid it's hopeless. I think I touched him somewhat, though, when I read Macaulay's stock piece on Johnson. The others saw it at once."

"Yes, you told me about that at the time," said the Reverend John, hurriedly.

"And our esteemed Head having taken him off maths for this précis-writing—whatever that means!—has turned him into a most objectionable free-lance. He was without any sense of reverence before, and promiscuous cheap fiction—which is all that his type of reading means—aggravates his worst points. When it came to a trial he was simply nowhere, you see."

"Ah, well! Ours is a hard calling—specially if one's sensitive. Luckily, I'm too fat." The Reverend John went out to bathe off the Pebble Ridge, girt with a fair linen towel whose red fringe signalled from half a mile away.

THERE lurked on summer afternoons, round the fives-court or the gym, certain watchful outcasts who had exhausted their weekly ration of three baths, and who were too well known to Cory the bathman to outface him by swearing that they hadn't. These came in like sycophantic pups at walk, and when the Reverend John climbed the Pebble Ridge, more than a dozen of them were at his heels, with never a towel among them. One could only bathe off the Ridge with a House Master, but, by custom, a dozen details, no matter whence recruited, made a "House" for bathing, if any kindly Master chose so to regard them. Beetle led the low, growing reminder: "House! House, sir? We've got a House now, Padre."

"Let it be law as it is desired," boomed the Reverend John. On which word they broke forward, hirpling over the unstable pebbles and stripping as they ran, till, when they touched the sands, they were as naked as God had made them, and as happy as He intended them to be.

It was half-flood—dead-smooth, except for the triple line of combers, a mile from wing to wing, that broke evenly with a sound of ripping canvas, while their sleek rear-guards formed up behind. One swam forth, trying to copy the roll, rise, and dig-out of the Reverend John's side-stroke, and manœuvred to meet them, so that they should crash on one's head, when for an instant one could glance down arched perspectives of beryl, before all broke in fizzy, electric diamonds and the pulse of the main surge slung one towards the beach. From a good comber's crest one was hove up almost to see Lundy on the horizon. In its long cream-streaked trough, when the top had turned over and gone on, one might be alone in mid-Atlantic. Either way it was divine. Then one capered on the sands till one dried off; retrieved scattered flannels, gave thanks in chorus to the Reverend John, and lazily trailed up to five-o'clock call-over, by grace taken on the cricket field.

"Eight this week," said Beetle, and thanked Heaven for them aloud.

"Bathing seems to have sapped your mind," the Reverend John remarked. "Why did you do so vilely with the Augustans?"

"They *are* vile, Padre. So's 'Lear.'"

"The other two did all right, though."

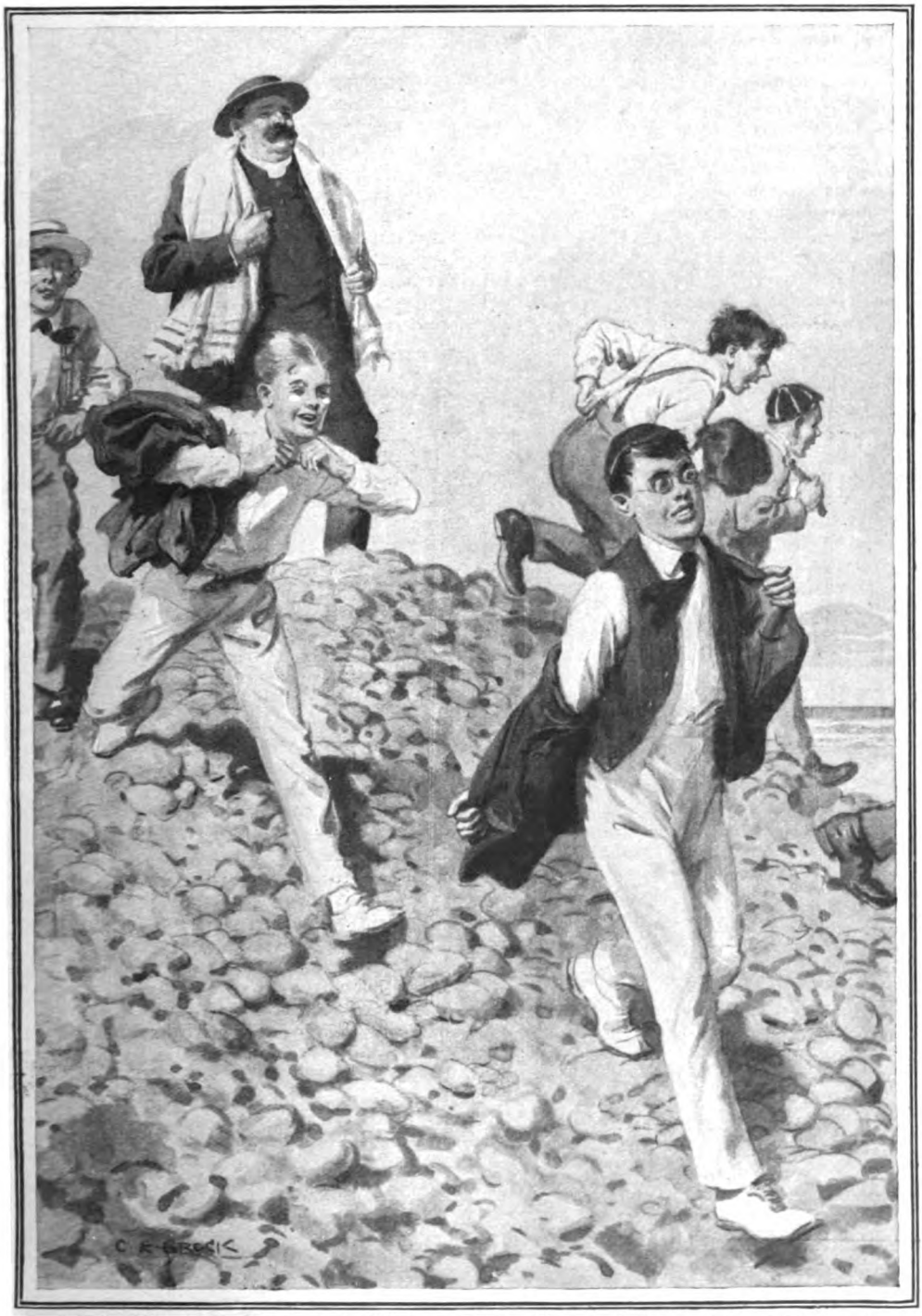
"I expect they've been swottin'," Beetle grinned.

"I've expected that, too, in my time. But I want to hear about the 'impassioned Diderot,' please."

"Oh, that was Howell, Padre. You mean when Diderot broke forth: 'Richardson, thou singular genius'? He'd read it in the holidays somewhere."

"I *beg* your pardon. Naturally, Taffy would read Diderot. Well, I'm sorry I can't lick you for this, but if anyone ever finds out anything about it, you've only yourself to thank."

Beetle went up to College and to the Outer Library, where he had on tap the last of a book called "Elsie Venner," by a man called Oliver Wendell Holmes—all about a girl who was interestingly allied to rattle-snakes. He finished what was left of her, and cast about for more from the same hand, which he found on the same shelf, with the trifling difference that the writer's Christian name was now Nathaniel, and he did not deal in snakes. The authorship of Shake-speare was his theme—not that Shakespeare with which King oppressed the Army Class, but a low-born, poaching, ignorant, immoral village lout who could not have written one line of any play ascribed to him. (Beetle wondered what King would say to Nathaniel if ever they met.) The real author was Francis Bacon, of "Bacon's Essays," which did not strike Beetle as any improvement. He had "done" the essays last term. But evidently Nathaniel's views annoyed



"Let it be law as it is desired," boomed the Reverend John. On which word they broke forward, stripping as they ran.

people, for the margins of his book—it was second-hand, and the old label of a public library still adhered—flamed with ribald, abusive, and contemptuous comments by various hands. They ranged from "Rot!" "Rubbish!" and such like to crisp counter-arguments. And several times someone had written: "This beats Delia." One copious annotator dissented, saying: "Delia is supreme in this line," "Delia beats this hollow." "See Delia's Philosophy, page so and so." Beetle grieved he could not find anything about Delia (he had often heard King's views on lady-writers as a class) beyond a statement by Nathaniel, with pencilled exclamation-points rocketting all round it, that "Delia Bacon discovered in Francis Bacon a good deal more than Macaulay." Taking it by and large, with the good help of the marginal notes, it appeared that Delia and Nathaniel between them had perpetrated every conceivable outrage against the Head-God of King's idolatry: and King was particular about his idols. Without pronouncing on the merits of the controversy, it occurred to Beetle that a dose of Nathaniel ought to work on King like a seidlitz powder. At this point a pencil and a half sheet of impot-paper came into action, and he went down to tea so swelled with Baconian heresies and blasphemies that he could only stutter between mouthfuls. He returned to his labours after the meal, and was visibly worse at prep.

"I say," he began, "have you ever heard that Shakespeare never wrote his own beastly plays?"

"Fat lot of good to us!" said Stalky. "We've got to swot 'em up just the same. Look here! This is for English parsin' to-morrow. It's your biznai." He read swiftly from the school "Lear" (Act II., Sc. 2) thus:—

STEWARD: "*Never any:*
*It pleased the King his master, very late,*
*To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;*
*When he, conjunct, an' flatterin' his displeasure,*
*Tripped me behind: bein' down, insulted, railed,*
*And put upon him such a deal of man,*
*That worthy'd him, got praises of the King*
*For him attempting who was self-subdued;*
*And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,*
*Drew me on here.*"

"Now then, my impassioned bard, *construez!* That's Shakespeare."

"Give it up! He's drunk," Beetle declared at the end of a blank half minute.

"No, he isn't," said Turkey. "He's a steward—on the estate—just chattin' to his employers."

"Well—look here, Turkey. You ask King if Shakespeare ever wrote his own plays, an' he won't give a dam' what the steward said."

"I've not come here to play with ushers," was McTurk's view of the case.

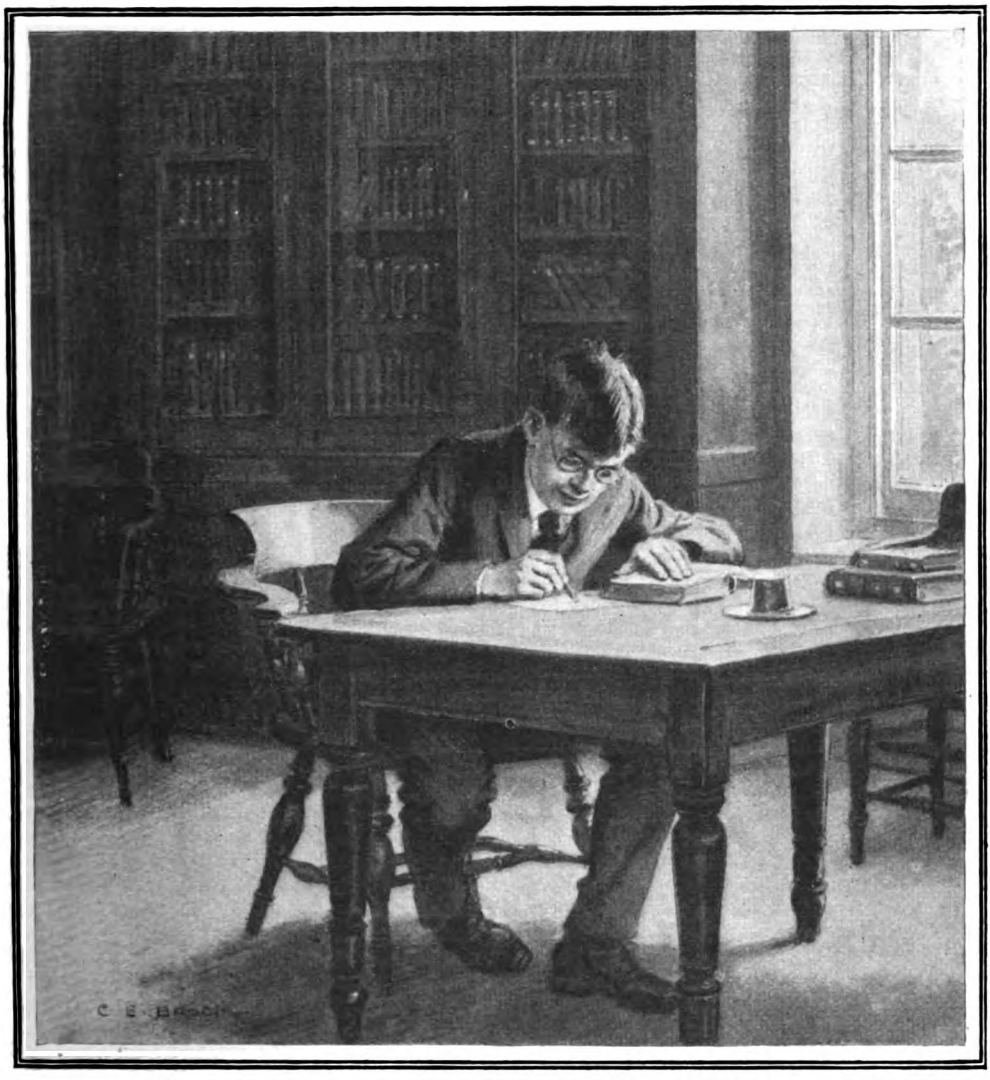
"I'd do it," Beetle protested, "only he'd slay *me!* He don't love me when I ask about things. I can give you the stuff to draw him—tons of it!" He broke forth into a précis, interspersed with praises, of Nathaniel Holmes and his commentators—especially the latter. He also mentioned Delia, with sorrow that he had not read her. He spoke through nearly the whole of prep; and the upshot of it was that McTurk relented and promised to approach King next "English" on the authenticity of Shakespeare's plays.

THE time and tone chosen were admirable. While King was warming himself by a preliminary canter round the Form's literary deficiencies, Turkey coughed in a style which suggested a reminder to an *employé* it was time to stop chattering and get to work. As King began to bristle, Turkey inquired: "I'd be glad to know, sir, if it's true that Shakespeare did not write his own plays at all?"

"Good God!" said King most distinctly. Turkey coughed again piously. "They all say so in Ireland, sir."

"Ireland — Ireland — Ireland!" King overran Ireland in one blast of flame that should have been written in letters of brass for instruction to-day. At the end, Turkey coughed once more, and the cough said: "It is Shakespeare, and not my country, that you are hired to interpret to me." He put it directly too: "An' is it true at all about the alleged plays, sir?"

"It is not," Mr. King whispered, and began to explain, on lines that might, perhaps, have been too freely expressed for the parents of those young (though it gave their offspring delight), but with a passion, force, and wealth of imagery that would have crowned his discourse at any University. By the time he drew towards his peroration the Form was almost openly applauding. Howell noiselessly drummed the cadence of "Bonnie Dundee" on his desk; Paddy Vernon framed a dumb: "Played! Oh, *well* played, sir!" at intervals; Stalky kept tally of the brighter gems of invective; and Beetle sat aghast but exulting among the spirits he had called up. For though their works had never been mentioned, and though Mr. King said he had merely glanced at the obscene publications, he seemed to know a tremendous amount about Nathaniel and Delia—especially Delia.



At this point a pencil and a half sheet of impot-paper came into action.

"I told you so!" said Beetle, proudly, at the end.

"What? *Him!* I wasn't botherin' myself to listen to him an' his Delia," McTurk replied.

Afterwards King fought his battle over again with the Reverend John in the Common Room.

"Had I been that triple ass Hume, I might have risen to the bait. As it is, I flatter myself I left them under no delusions as to Shakespeare's authenticity. Yes, a small drink, please. Virtue has gone out of me indeed. But *where* did they get it from?"

"The devil! The young devil," the Reverend John muttered, half aloud.

"I could have excused devilry. It was ignorance. Sheer, crass, insolent provincial ignorance. I tell you, Gillett, if the Romans had dealt faithfully with the Celt, *ab initio*, this—this would never have happened."

"Quite so. I should like to have heard your remarks."

"I've told 'em to tell me what they remember of it, with their own conclusions, in essay form next week."

Since he had loosed the whirlwind, the fair-minded Beetle offered to do Turkey's essay for him. On Turkey's behalf, then,

he dealt with Shakespeare's lack of education, his butchering, poaching, drinking, horse-holding, and errand-running as Nathaniel had described them; lifted from the same source pleasant names, such as "rustic" and "sorry poctaster," on which last special hopes were built; and expressed surprise that one so ignorant could have done "what he was attributed to." His own essay contained no novelties. Indeed, he withheld one or two promising "subsequently transpireds" for fear of distracting King.

BUT, when the essays were read, Mr. King confined himself wholly to Turkey's pitiful, puerile, jejune, exploded, unbaked, half-bottomed thesis. He touched, too, on the "lie in the soul," which was, fundamentally, vulgarity—the negation of Reverence and the Decencies. He broke forth into an impassioned defence of "mere atheism," which he said was often no more than mental flatulence—transitory and curable by knowledge of life—in no way comparable, for essential enormity, with the debasing pagan abominations to which Turkey had delivered himself. He ended with a shocking story about one Jowett, who seemed to have held some post of authority where King came from, and who had told an atheistical undergraduate that if he could not believe in a Personal God by five that afternoon he would be expelled—as, with tears of rage in his eyes, King regretted that he could not expel McTurk. And Turkey blew his nose in the middle of it.

But the aim of education being to develop individual judgment, King could not well kill him for his honest doubts about Shakespeare; and he himself had more than once quoted, in respect to other poets: "There lives more faith in honest doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds." So he treated Turkey in Form like a coiled puff-adder, and there was a tense peace among the Augustans. The only ripple was the day before the Army Examiner came, when Beetle inquired if he "needed to take this exam., sir, as I'm not goin' up for anything." Mr. King said there was great need—for many reasons, none of them flattering to vanity.

As far as the Army Class could judge, the Examiner was not worse than his breed, and the written "English" paper ran closely on the lines of King's mid-term General Knowledge test. Howell played his "impassioned Diderot" to the Richardson lead; Stalky his parson in the wig; McTurk his contemptible Swift; Beetle, Steele's affectionate notes out of the sponging-house to "Dearest Prue," all in due order. There were, however, one or two leading questions about Shakespeare. A boy's hand shot up from a back bench.

"In answering Number Seven—reasons for Shakespeare's dramatic supremacy"—he said, "are we to take it Shakespeare *did* write the plays he is supposed to have written, sir?"

The Examiner hesitated an instant. "It is generally assumed that he did." But there was no reproof in his words. Beetle began to sit down slowly.

Another hand and another voice: "Have we got to say we believe he did, sir? Even if we do nott?"

"You are not called upon to state your beliefs. But we can go into that at *viva voce* this afternoon—if it interests you."

"Thank you, sir."

"What did you do that for?" Paddy Vernon demanded at dinner.

"It's the lost tribes of Israel game, you ass," said Howell.

"To make sure," Stalky amplified. "If he was like King, he'd have shut up Beetle an' Turkey at the go-off, but he'd have thought King gave us the Bacon notion. Well, he didn't shut 'em up; so they're playin' it this afternoon. If he stands it then, he'll be sure King gave us the notion. Either way, it's dead safe for us—*an'* King."

At the afternoon's *viva voce*, before they sat down to the Augustans, the Examiner wished to hear, "with no bearing on the examination, of course," from those two candidates who had asked him about Question Seven. Which were they?

"Take off your gigs, you owl," said Stalky between his teeth. Beetle pocketed them and looked into blurred vacancy with a voice coming out of it that asked: "Who—what gave you that idea about Shakespeare?" From Stalky's kick he knew the question was for him.

"Some people say, sir, there's a good deal of doubt about it nowadays, sir."

"Ye-es, that's true, but——"

"It's his knowin' so much about legal phrases." Turkey was in support—a lone gun barking somewhere to his right.

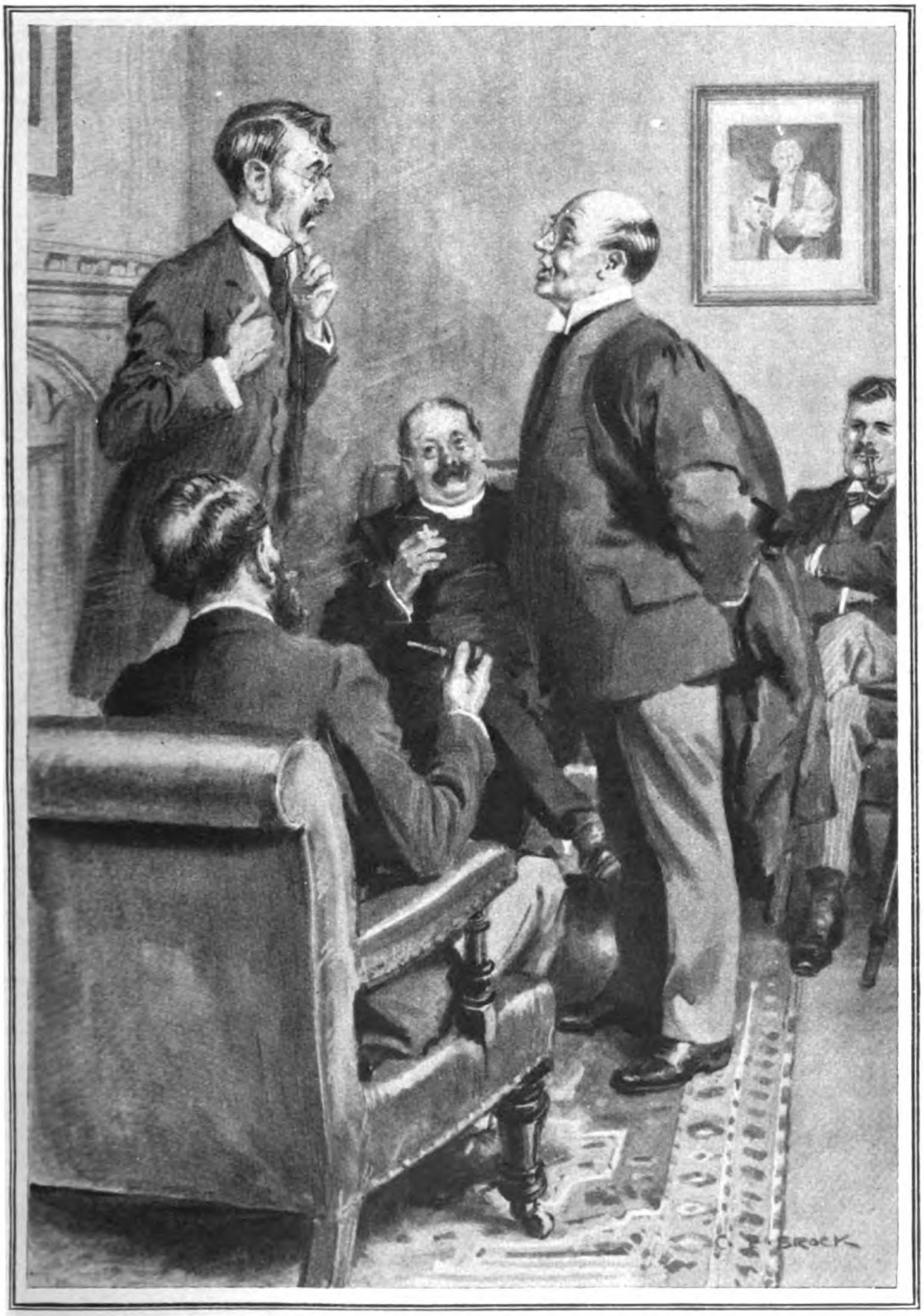
"That *is* a crux, I admit. Of course, whatever one may think privately, officially Shakespeare *is* Shakespeare. But how have *you* been taught to look at the question?"

"Well, Holmes says it's impossible he could——"

"On the legal phraseology alone, sir," McTurk chimed in.

"Ah, but the theory is that Shakespeare's experiences in the society of that day brought him in contact with all the leading intellects." The Examiner's voice was quite colloquial now.

"But they didn't think much of actors



Mr. King exploded on the hearth-rug. "Heaven knows I'm as conscious of my own infirmities as my worst enemy can be, but what have I done to deserve this?"

then, sir, did they?" This was Howell cooing like a cushat dove. "I mean——"

The Examiner explained the status of the Elizabethan actor in some detail, ending: "And that makes it the more curious, doesn't it?"

"And this Shakespeare was supposed to be writin' plays and actin' in 'em *all* the time?" McTurk asked, with sinister meaning.

"Exactly what *I*—what lots of people have pointed out. Where *did* he get the time to acquire all his special knowledge?"

"Then it looks as if there was something in it, doesn't it, sir?"

"That," said the Examiner, squaring his elbows at ease on the desk, "is a very large question which——"

"Yes, sir!"—in half-a-dozen eagerly attentive keys. . . .

For decency's sake a few Augustan questions were crammed in conscience-strickenly, about the last ten minutes. Howell took them since they involved dates, but the answers, though highly marked, were scarcely heeded. When the clock showed six-thirty the Examiner addressed them as "Gentlemen"; and said he would have particular pleasure in speaking well of this Army Class, which had shown such a genuine and unusual interest in English Literature, and which reflected the greatest credit on their instructors. He passed out: the Form upstanding, as custom was.

"He's goin' to congratulate King," said Howell. "Don't make a row! 'Don't—make—a—noise—Or else you'll wake the Baby!'" . . .

MR. KING of Balliol, after Mr. Hume of Sutton had complimented him, as was only just, before all his colleagues in Common Room, was kindly taken by the Reverend John to his study, where he exploded on the hearth-rug.

"He—he thought *I* had loosed this—this rancid Baconian rot among them. He complimented me on my breadth of mind—my being abreast of the times! You heard him? That's how they think at Sutton. It's an open sty! A lair of bestial—— They have a chapel there, Gillett, and they pray for their souls—their *souls!*"

"His particular weakness apart, Hume was perfectly sincere about what you'd done for the Army Class. He'll report in that sense, too. That's a feather in your cap, and a deserved one. He said their interest in Literature was unusual. That is *all* your work, King."

"But I bowed down in the House of Rimmon while he Baconized all over me!—poor devil of an usher that I am! You heard it! I ought to have spat in his eye. Heaven knows I'm as conscious of my own infirmities as my worst enemy can be, but what have I done to deserve this? What *have* I done?"

"That's just what I was wondering," the Reverend John replied. "Have you, perchance, done anything?"

"Where? How?"

"In the Army Class, for example."

"Assuredly not. My Army Class? I couldn't wish for a better set—keen, interested enough to read outside their allotted task—intelligent, receptive! They're head and shoulders above last year's. The idea that I, forsooth, should, even by inference, have perverted their minds with this imbecile and unspeakable girls'-school tripe that Hume professes! *You* at least know that I have my standards; and in Literature and in the Classics, I hold *maxima debetur pueris reverentia.*"*

"It's singular, not plural, isn't it?" said the Reverend John. "But you're absolutely right as to the principle! . . . Ours is a deadly calling, King—specially if one happens to be sensitive."

* The greatest respect is due to young people.

# WHEN I WAS YOUNG

A SERIES of ARTICLES by CELEBRITIES of TO-DAY describing HOW THEY VIEWED LIFE IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

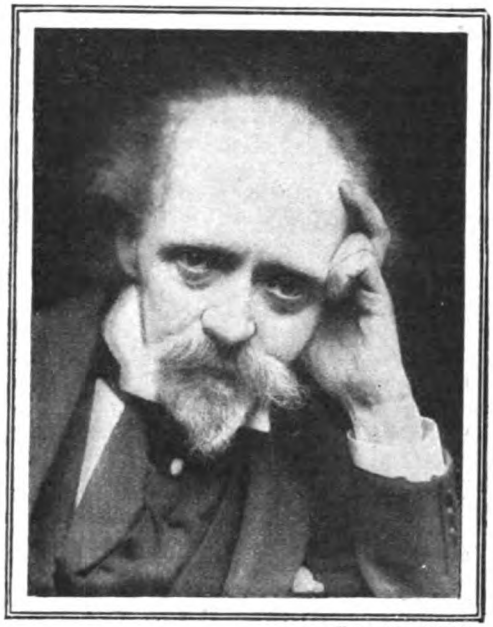


Photo: Cassell Smith

No. 10

## SIR HALL CAINE

II.

IN last month's STRAND I told of a first novel which, although immature and perhaps unworthy, achieved an unexpected success. That is not, by any means, an unusual event. Looking back on my literary life, I find it difficult to make a reckoning of the number of first novels that have succeeded. This leads me to think that under favourable conditions almost anybody could write at least one successful novel. Nature is everywhere so interesting that, granted the gift of simple and unaffected expression, there seems no reason why, if faithfully recorded, there should not be a readable and even remarkable novel in almost every human life.

But the writing of a successful first novel is by no means an assurance that the writer is a novelist. That only appears after a second, third, or even fourth attempt, when personal memories, which are always vivid and often romantic, have been exhausted or begun to fade, and the story-teller has to establish his right to the name by creating a new world out of early observation, or perhaps largely out of imagination, with such conviction, sincerity, and vision as are in him.

It is no easy task. A great writer of our time once said to me: "I never write unless I must—I don't like the job well enough." With all my own itch for writing I realized early that to write well was no light matter, and that the writing of fiction which was to be of any account was a calling I could not share with my other occupation. So it came to pass that, notwithstanding my youthful success in deputizing for a famous novelist who had failed, I saw that I should never write a novel to any purpose until I had liberated my mind and time from journalism. This was a serious necessity. It was risking a regular income against a chance. But I had to face it. My reviewing in the literary journals I could cut down at will, but the *Mercury* was at once my daily employment and my principal, if modest, source of income, and it was not without serious deliberation with my young wife, hardly knowing where we were, or what leap in the dark we were taking, with infinite misgiving and most natural if ludicrous nervousness, that I wrote to my editor in Liverpool asking him to reduce my salary!

The good fellow (he was John Lovell, the

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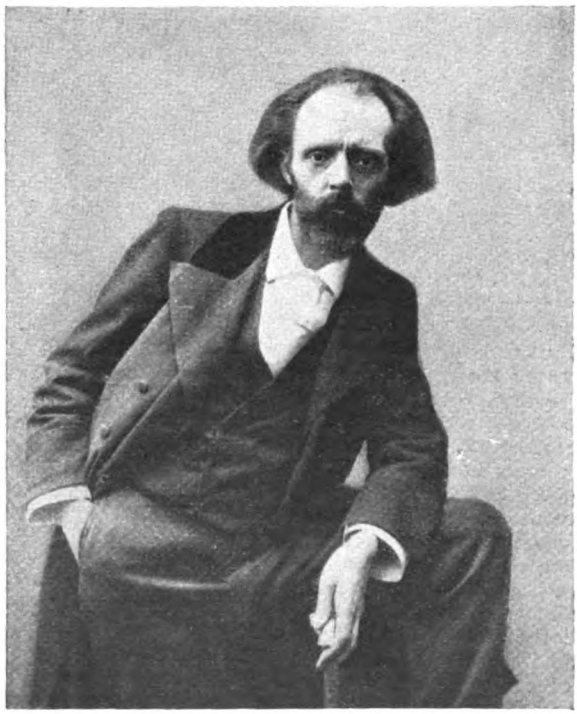
first manager of the Press Association) was flabbergasted. He replied that he was frequently requested to increase a salary, but he had never before been asked to reduce one, and he would like to know if I was well and really in earnest. I answered that, so far as I knew, I was in good health, that I was very much in earnest, and that my request was founded on the rational expectation of earning more money in the long run by gaining more time for another form of literary work which was nearer to my heart. Lovell (a big, fat, genial soul) came to see me; satisfied himself that I was not demented; shared my belief that if I was taking a risk it was a reasonably safe one; my salary was reduced by half, and then I wrote and published my first novel. And that is the story of my beginning as a professional novelist.

### A NAME IN A NOVEL.

The result was satisfactory. Rossetti had been right. After years of fumbling with the keys of an open door, I had discovered beyond question that the work of my life was to be that of the story-teller. But nobody knew better than myself that I owed much of whatever success I had in my early years to the scenes I worked in, first in my mother's country, Cumberland, and afterwards in my father's, which was now my own. My recollections of the Isle of Man were a deep lucky-bag into which I found I could dip for character and incident and human motive without touching the more racy treasures of my friend, T. E. Brown. I took my Manx materials as they came up to me, without regard to time or place, handled them as I pleased, tossed them about to suit my needs, the mean and the grotesque, the noble and the powerful, the saintly Bishop Wilson, who dragged a fallen woman across Peel Bay at the tail of a boat to save her soul, and the sinful old Bushell, the secretary of Lord Bacon, who doomed himself to solitary life on our "Calf" islet to save his own.

Sometimes I took more than I was conscious of. Let me tell a story which may be of some interest in showing the operation of the subconscious memory. During my boyhood in that cottage on the edge of the Curragh I used to go down to the sea to play and bathe, and close to the shore there stood the ruins of the old parish church, roofless then, I think, and surrounded by a graveyard of rank grass in which lay the subsiding gravestones of many of my humble forefathers. But the grave that chiefly interested me was a box-tomb (which served me for a vaulting-block) between the toppling gate-piers and the church porch. I cannot recall that I ever read the inscription upon it, although I must have done so, as subsequent happenings show.

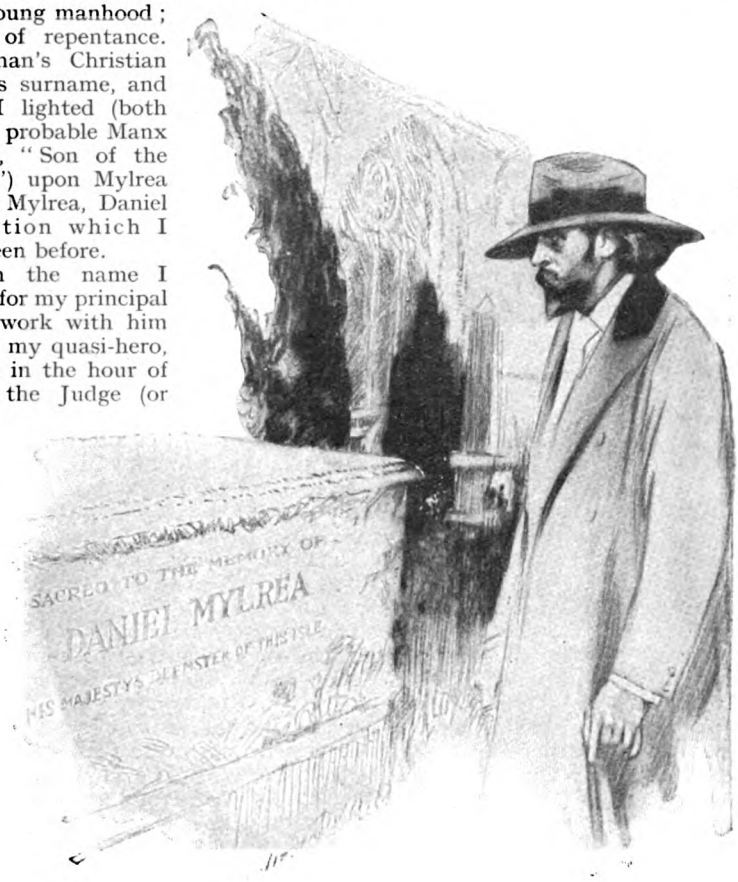
Twenty-odd years later, when I was about to write my first Manx novel, I was seriously concerned to find the right name for my principal personage. I knew his character perfectly—that of a reckless young scapegrace who was something of a hero too, with his good and bad angels on either side of him—and I wanted a name that should fit every stage of his life: his childhood, when he was a winsome little rascal; his young manhood when, helped by an attractive personality, he was going headlong to the devil; and his later days, when he was making atonement for a terrible crime. It was not easy to choose even his Christian name, but at last I decided upon Daniel—Danny for his jolly childhood;



An unpublished portrait of Sir Hall Caine taken at the time of the publication of "The Manxman."

Dan for his reckless young manhood; Daniel for his days of repentance. Having found my man's Christian name, I looked for his surname, and after long searching I lighted (both for its rhythm and its probable Manx or Gaelic significance, "Son of the servant of Judgment") upon Mylrea—Danny Mylrea, Dan Mylrea, Daniel Mylrea, a combination which I thought I had never seen before.

Fully satisfied with the name I thought I had created for my principal character, I went to work with him and ended by making my quasi-hero, by order of the King, in the hour of his great atonement, the Judge (or Deemster) of our island. My book was published and dramatized in various countries, and then, many years later, I returned to the neighbourhood of the old church with a picnic party. While my friends were at tea on the shore I strolled back to the churchyard, and there I had something of a shock. The church was restored, the box-tomb was cleared of the moss that had grown over it, and there, clear and clean, the inscription ran: "Sacred to the memory of Daniel Mylrea, His Majesty's Deemster of this Isle."




I strolled back to the churchyard, and there I had something of a shock.

What I thought I had created I had merely remembered.

### A CHARGE OF PLAGIARISM.

The conscious as well as subconscious memories of childhood have sometimes landed me in more serious difficulties. The story of one of them may perhaps bear to be told, as offering a simple and natural explanation of certain of the literary coincidences which perplex the readers of novels. When I was at school I had the misfortune, on the cricket-field, to hit a boy over the eye with the cricket-ball, and in distress at the misadventure I took him off to the nearest eye hospital. It was a public institution in a poor part of Liverpool, and we had to sit in a queue of patients who were waiting for the attention of the doctors. Our nearest neighbour on the bench in the waiting-room was a young mother who had both eyes bandaged and a very young baby on her lap. She was the brightest creature in the room, crowing over her child, babbling to it, and kissing it. Through the conversation of some older women about her we heard her story, and, as nearly as I can remember it, it was this.

The trouble to her eyes had begun some time before; there had been an operation, and after it her eyes had been closely bandaged, and while she was in the dark her baby had been born. Thus she had never yet seen her child. But that day the bandage was to be removed for some moments, and it had been promised her that she should have one glimpse of her baby before she was again shut up into the dark. So she was waiting for the greatest moment of her life—the moment when she was to see her child!

I never forgot that incident. As the

years went on and life deepened my knowledge of human nature, I saw it with increasing emotion, its chances, its dangers, its rapture, its possible tragedy. And when I came to write one of the earliest of my novels I tried my best to put myself into the heart of the young mother and see the great adventure from there, adding to what had actually happened the poignant and perhaps too harrowing fiction that the child sickened and died before the time came to remove the bandage from the mother's eyes, and in the agony of her love she tore it away at the last instant and saw her child—but only saw it die.

The novel in which I did this was not particularly successful, but the episode of the blind mother and the dying child was loudly praised by the public, and I began to think I was taking a place among the novelists. Yet Fate was at my heels. A little later than the publication of my novel my friend the late Sir George Newnes started THE STRAND MAGAZINE, and the first number contained a translation of a story from the French of a much earlier period, which, although it differed in plot, was precisely the same in its central incident. My stock went down. I had stolen my story. I was only a literary plagiarist. Smarting under this implication, I told in one of the newspapers what had happened to me as a boy. I was believed; some of the leading critics (among them Andrew Lang) warned the public that when they saw the same incident in two books they were not necessarily to conclude that one author had stolen from another, and I, for my part, drew the moral that memories of early life were the strongest factors in the making of fiction, and that Nature was the greatest of all the novelists.

### A TRAGIC STORY.

It is now more than forty years since I published my first recognizable and acknowledged novel, and as far as I can judge it is still alive. I get just as many letters about it as I did in its earliest days, some of them being stimulating and helpful, others rather foolish and futile. We who are story-tellers (a fraternity with which almost any scribbler thinks he has a right to take liberties) have to learn early the difficult virtue of suffering fools gladly, but if there is salt in us, the public, which is loyal and long-suffering, help us to learn it. Into the experiences of all the masters of our craft (Thackeray, Dickens, Turgenief, Balzac, Hugo) there have come many moments when, with a thrill of the heart, they could tell themselves that they had touched life very nearly. I think one such moment came to me, and, poignant and almost painful as it was, I ask to be permitted to give an account of it.

Shortly after the publication of my first Manx novel I was startled by the reports of a murder which seemed to reproduce some of the incidents and the whole of the spirit of my story. A young Oxford man (of rather reckless character, but not bad at heart) had married, and taken his young wife to Canada. They had settled somewhere in a remote place far back on the edge of a forest. After a time the young husband had asked a close friend in England to come out and join them. He had come, and what had happened thereafter, in the little settlement of husband, wife, and friend, nobody seemed to know. One day the husband and the friend had been seen going together into the forest, and only the husband had come out of it. After a while the body of the friend was found, and then the husband was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and executed. Not a remarkable sequence of incidents, but full of hints of spiritual tragedy.

A few weeks after the execution I received a letter from an official in the Ministry of Justice in Ottawa, telling me that he had taken a deep interest in the condemned man, visited him frequently while he lay in the State prison, and provided him with books. Three or four days before the day fixed for his death the prisoner had said:—

"When I was passing through London I heard of a novel which I should like to read now."

"What was the name of it?" asked my correspondent.

"I can't remember."

"What was the author's name?"

"I can't remember that either. But it was about a young fellow, not a bad sort, who killed his dearest friend, and then made good and died splendidly."

"Why, that must be 'So-and-so,' by Hall Caine. I'll bring it along to you."

My correspondent had taken my book to the prisoner, and the doomed man had spent his last days in reading it. On the morning of his death he had written this letter, of which my correspondent enclosed a copy:—

"Seven a.m. I have just finished that novel, sitting up all night to do so. God bless you! It has strengthened me for the end."

When I read the letter I heard the ring of that poor lad's footsteps on the scaffold, made firmer for something I had written, and I forgot all about the sleepless nights my book had cost me.

### LIGHT LITERATURE.

Perhaps I should have hesitated to tell this personal story but for something that happened to me only a few days ago. I was

in Scotland, on a motor tour, which I had long promised myself, to the last homes of Burns and Scott, at Dumfries and Abbotsford (a most moving experience to me), when, drawing up in a remote little town at a newsagent's shop for the day's *Scotsman*, I fell into conversation with the newsagent himself about the books he was also offering for sale. They were nearly all novels, some of them cheap enough, perhaps, in both senses, while others were worthy books by the best writers, living and dead, British and foreign. But the good man was ashamed of them all, and humiliated in his own eyes by the necessity of his trade to stock and sell "light literature."

"It's a great pity," he said, "but at this season of the year" (it was the holiday season) "people can't be persuaded to read anything better worth their time and money."

He did not know who I was and I did not tell him. But in the market-place outside his shop, and clearly to be seen through his open doorway, there was a monument to the author of "Waverley," and I began to talk about that. The good man answered my questions calmly, and did not seem to be in the least embarrassed.

**I fell into conversation with the newsagent about the books he was offering for sale.**

### FIRST VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

I am tempted to tell, as the last of my stories, one which, although it does not come from my youth, relates to my young manhood and the effect produced upon the best-known of my early books by a great man who is too little remembered now-Joseph Cowen of Newcastle.

My first knowledge of him dates far back. Some years before I went up to London, at the invitation of Rossetti, to take the chances of life there, and while I was still a very young man, I had taken a stolen look at the Metropolis by going up from Liverpool by the midnight train one day and returning by the midnight train the day following, sitting up in a third-class carriage both ways. The intervening morning I had spent in Fleet Street, gazing at the London newspaper offices (almost unbelievable realities to me), and the afternoon and evening in the gallery of the House of Commons, to which I had been introduced by a gentle old Irish member who bore the reputation of a bloodthirsty Fenian.

At that first visit the Mother of Parliaments did not impress me. I thought the proceedings on the whole deadly, the speak-

ing poor, and the behaviour of the majority of the members (coming in and going out and talking audibly to each other while a fellow-member was addressing the Assembly) shamefully ill-mannered. But there were two living moments, and the first of them was when somebody rose from the Irish benches (I am afraid it was Mr. Healy) and, thrusting his head forward from his shoulders in the direction of the Prime Minister, made what I thought a bitter attack upon him. Hardly had the offender finished when Mr. Gladstone leapt to his feet, whereupon the air of the House thundered and lightninged for a short ten minutes, and then subsided to a kind of shivering silence when he sat down.

After that the Chamber emptied rapidly, yet the debate droned on for several somnambulent hours, like a man talking in his sleep. But towards ten o'clock somebody rose from an unseen place, which I now know to be "below the gangway," and spoke with a broad Northumbrian burr. He spoke well, with fine phrase and in faultless style. "Who is it?" I asked of my nearest neighbour. "Hush! It's Joe," he answered, meaning Joe Cowen, the other Joe (Chamberlain) not yet having risen above the horizon. The House filled rapidly, the Prime Minister, who had gone out, returned, and everybody listened. When I was running off to catch my train (I had no luggage) I was carrying away two memories—of Gladstone in a fury and of somebody whose name had hitherto been unknown to me, speaking in a North-country accent with the tongue of Edmund Burke.

## JOSEPH COWEN OF NEWCASTLE.

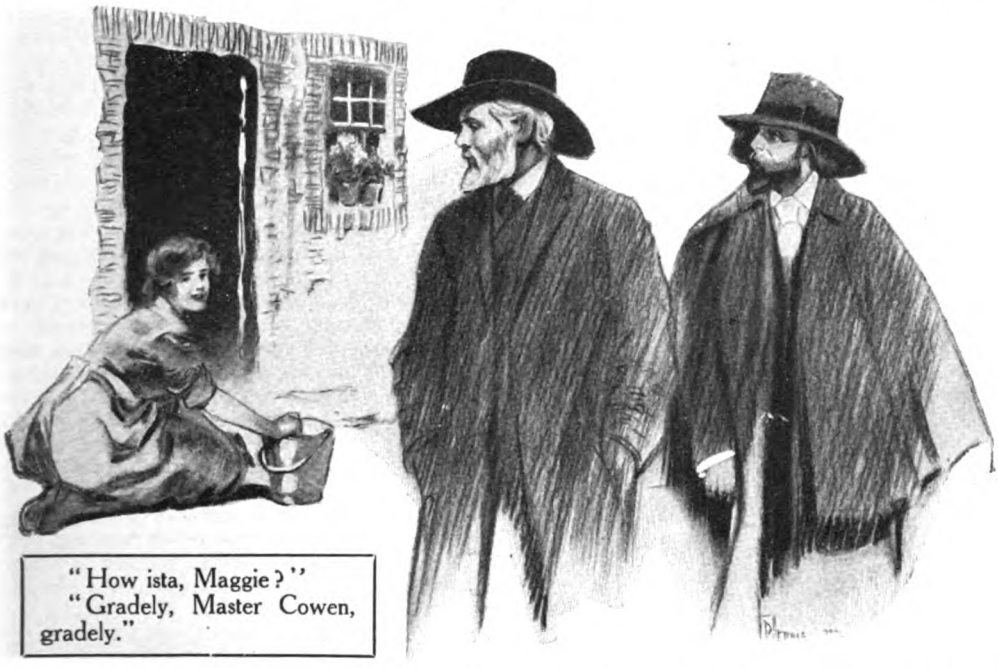
Years passed: I had lost all interest in current politics, become absorbed in literary activities, and written a novel which everybody seemed to be denouncing, when a letter, signed Joseph Cowen, came to me from the office of *The Newcastle Chronicle*. As nearly as I can remember, not having the letter at hand, it began: "Sir,—I have read your book and am at a loss to understand what is being said about it. Either I know nothing about literature or the people who are writing in the newspapers now are dunces of dunces." More of the same kind there was, all very healing to my wounded feelings, and the letter concluded by saying that if I were ever in Newcastle the writer would like me to spend the night at his house.

It shocks my lifelong pride in my circumstantial memory (sometimes a bad thing to be born with) that I had utterly forgotten that my correspondent was the Joseph Cowen whose speaking had stirred me to admiration on my first visit to the House of Commons, but there was enough in his letter to make me wish to meet him, so a little later I availed myself of his invitation. It was evening when I reached Newcastle, and the slow train I had travelled by had been full, in the last stages of its journey, of workmen apparently returning from their work in the suburbs. With my bag in hand, I was walking down the platform among the throng when I noticed that nearly everybody was doffing his cap to somebody who seemed to be coming towards us, and in a clearing of the crowd I saw who it was—a little elderly man who looked like a Scripture-reader in a small provincial town, wearing a long black sack coat and a billy-cock. He stopped when he came abreast of me, and said, "I am Joseph Cowen, and I've come to meet you." At the gate of the station there was a rather gorgeous carriage, with two magnificent grey horses, waiting for us, and seeing, perhaps, a look of astonishment in my eyes, Cowen said, "This isn't mine. I borrowed it from my daughter to bring you up." His house was some distance outside the town, and darkness had fallen before we reached it, so I did not see until morning that it was an ancient abbey modernized.

## STORIES OF MAZZINI.

We dined alone, and sat up talking until one or two in the morning. Rarely had I had a more glorious night, and now it is a golden memory. I was to go on from there to visit Ruskin at Coniston, and, hearing this, Cowen told me that Brantwood had once belonged to him, although the ostensible owner had, I think, been Lynton, the engraver, whom I had known as the husband of Mrs. Lynn Lynton, who wrote "Joshua Davidson." This led to some vivid stories, one of them concerning Brantwood as the scene, before Ruskin's time, of a Jane Eyre tragedy of a hidden mad wife, with the sequel reversed, and another of Brantwood, buried in the close shelter of perhaps the remotest valley in the kingdom, as the head-centre of a secret press for international propaganda (the printing shed is there still; I saw it the other day) at the time of the activities of Orsini and Mazzini.

I gathered that Cowen and his father had found the money for all, and that the end of it had been that he was shut out of nearly every country in Europe. It was a thrilling thing to listen for hours to that gentle, soft-voiced old man, and to realize, little by little, that he had been, perhaps, one of the inspiring forces of the revolution in the middle of the nineteenth century, which had done so much for the liberties of Europe. He told me many personal stories of Mazzini,



"How ista, Maggie?"
"Gradely, Master Cowen, gradely."

whom he had known intimately in the dark days of his hard life in lodgings in Soho, and not a few of them have since, in various forms of dramatization, gone into my books. I was deeply moved, but I shudder at the recollection of a blunder I made, in my continued forgetfulness of that experience of my young manhood in the gallery of the House of Commons.

"Mr. Cowen," I said, "I wonder that you, with your wonderful knowledge of European affairs, have not gone into Parliament."

"I was in Parliament for seven years," he answered quietly.

When the time came to go to bed we lit two candles and passed through low groined stone corridors to a lofty chamber in which our lights seemed lost. There was a big four-poster, with heavy curtains, and on the wall beside it a water-colour portrait of Garibaldi, with this inscription on the mount: "To my dear friend Joseph Cowen from Giuseppe Garibaldi."

"Did you know Garibaldi?" I asked.

"He has often slept in this bed," said Cowen.

Next morning we walked down to his pits (he was a coal-owner as well as a newspaper proprietor), and passing some miners' cottages on the way, where a miner's young wife was on her knees washing the doorstep, he looked down at her and said:—

"How ista, Maggie?"

"Gradely, Master Cowen, gradely," said the young woman.

Towards noon he saw me off by train, and then, going back to my condemned book, he said, as nearly as I can remember:—

"Don't mind those fellows in the newspapers. Get the spirit of Mazzini into your next novel and it will be an honour to Hall Caine and to English fiction."

It is not for me to say what the result was, but that was the origin of the best-read of my books.

### AN EFFORT OF MEMORY.

Looking over what I have written for these two numbers of THE STRAND, I see that I have not yet said anything about my beginnings in a sphere of literary activity with which my name is sometimes associated—that of the dramatist. After I had written the earliest of my novels, my very dear friend, R. D. Blackmore, the author of the ever-delightful "Lorna Doone," said, in a letter which has since been published, that, whatever my success in fiction, my literary future lay in drama; and I think my equally dear friend Wilkie Collins was also of this opinion. I have disappointed the expectation of both of them, but I could wish to show that it was not altogether an unreasonable one by narrating an incident of my boyhood, not so much for any light it casts on my beginnings as a dramatist as for the sake of a treasured memory which I must share with a great multitude.

When I was about seventeen years of age

Leaning eagerly over the front rail of a not very crowded upper circle, I saw Henry Irving in "The Bells" on three alternate nights.

would not vouch for the literal accuracy of the whole of my transcript, he thought it an amazing proof of memory, and would like me to lunch with him.

### HENRY IRVING.

I found that the elderly Burgomaster of the play was in real life a young man in his early thirties, sprightly, restless, going upstairs three steps at a time, talking vigorously and in spurts, not strikingly intellectual at that period, and otherwise suggesting nothing in the world so little as the grave, reserved, dignified, distinguished, almost august personality which he developed into in his latter days. I assume I must have said something of my Manx origin, for he told me that when he was about twenty-five, and playing a season in stock at Liverpool, an old lady living there had conceived such wonderful hopes of him that she had offered him fifty pounds to carry a little company across to the Isle of Man to play the big parts in the big dramas. He had taken the old lady at her generous word, and for a few weeks thereafter he had occupied, with his colleagues, the only theatre in Douglas in those days, a cock-pit half encircled by four tiers of steep seats, a tiny but historic house of entertainment, which still stands in a back street and has been converted into a barracks for the Salvation Army.

Here his fortunes had been various and his activities many, ranging from ringing the bell and shouting the name of the night's play at the door to racing round to the back, diving into a costume, leaping on to the stage, and plunging into a part—sometimes Hamlet, if I remember rightly. When he had an audience he played ; and when he had no audience the good man at whose house he lodged, being a boatman, lent him a boat and he spent the evening rowing about the bay. The old lady's fifty pounds were soon exhausted, and then the boatman sent the company back to Liverpool, probably by steerage passage.

Henry Irving first played "The Bells," and I was deeply moved by his impersonation of the guilty man who, in the long race of a haunted life, was pursued by remorse, or perhaps by fear of detection, until, without any other danger threatening him, he was overtaken by it, seized by it, and choked to death. As far as I can remember I had never before been inside a theatre except once (to see Phelps play Isaac of York in a drama of which I cannot remember the name), and it may be that the novelty of the conditions under which I saw the performance contributed to the impression it made upon me. I saw it on three alternate nights, leaning eagerly over the front rail of a not very crowded upper circle, and on going up to my bedroom after my third visit to the theatre I sat through the night, until the dawn coming in at the window dimmed the light from my gas-bracket, writing out every word, as I believed, of the play, from the rise of the curtain to its fall. Next day I sent my version of "The Bells" to Irving, who replied, saying, as nearly as I can remember, that while he

Such, I assume, was Sir Henry Irving's first adventure as a theatrical manager, and as, perhaps, the last remaining souvenir of it I am giving the Editor of this magazine a portrait of the young manager taken at Douglas in his middle twenties, so that its readers may compare what he was with what he became.

### A CENSORED PLAY.

From that first meeting, when I was a boy of about seventeen or eighteen and he was a man of thirty-three, until the time of his death, I shared with a great number his friendly acquaintance. It was chiefly cultivated in a well-known club, or in a supper-room under the Lyceum Theatre, in the early hours of morning, amid the odour of kippered herrings and grilled kidneys and the atmosphere of good cigars. But there were solemn moments, too, in which we came closer, as when we went together to Tennyson's funeral in Westminster Abbey, or perhaps it was Gladstone's, or both, and then I realized how much his mind had grown and his emotions had deepened. This led to the thought in both that perhaps I might write a play to suit him, and not long after I had produced a dramatized version of one of my novels, which won me a good deal of praise and cost my management a great loss of money, he came to my rooms with a biography of "Mohammed," and said :—

"Can you write me a play on that subject ?"

I spent several months in an effort to do so, but before I had finished my task, the newspapers having in the meantime got wind of our enterprise, Irving received a letter from the Lord Chamberlain's office telling him not to risk a rebuff by asking for a licence for a play which by reason of its theme would surely give offence to His Majesty's Moslem subjects. I think it was something of a disappointment to Irving that he was not to be permitted to play the part of the dusky son of the desert, and I know that the official censorship of my first serious effort at the writing of a play was, perhaps not too disastrously, a death blow to my ambition as a dramatist.

### A STORY OF IRVING.

Nevertheless, I continued for a period to make dramatized versions of certain of my novels, but, reversing my former fortune, getting a great deal of abuse for them and earning a good deal of money, and this led to my last meeting with Irving and to a touching incident. It was at Drury Lane Theatre (where Irving was playing his farewell engagement) at that dull hour of noon when the stage of a theatre before a rehearsal is lit only by a kind of two-branch candlestick, and, with the curtain up, the chasm of the orchestra and the empty auditorium are clothed in black. Irving was walking to and fro on the stage with his friend Loveday, or perhaps it was my friend Stoker, uttering that ominous throaty cough which had too long distressed those of us who loved him, when I went down

and joined him. He had heard that I was sharing the embarrassment of my ever-sympathetic manager, Arthur Collins, in the selection of the actor to play my leading part (Sir George Alexander afterwards played it admirably), and he said :—

" If you had your choice of all the leading men on the stage, whom would you choose ? "

" Your boy Harry," I replied, whereupon he stood silent for a moment and then turned up the dark stage, and when he came slowly back I thought his eyes were wet.

That was the last I was to see of him, and when I heard of him next I was in New York. After an exhausting day spent in rehearsing (a task for which the imaginative writer is by temperament often unfit) I had gone to bed early and was falling asleep, when the telephone bell rang by my bedside and a voice said :—

" This is the Editor of the *New York Herald*. Henry Irving has just died in England. Can you write us something about him ? "

It was a shock such as I do not think I had experienced since the day of my boyhood, when going to my office I saw on a newspaper placard, " Death of Dickens," and I went about saying to everybody, " Dickens is dead."

Next day I wrote, not without difficulty, a page of the *New York Herald*, consisting chiefly of personal anecdotes. I thought then, and I think still, that taken altogether, and notwithstanding manifest limitations, Irving was the greatest actor of his time, in any country. But those who remember him as far back as I do, and knew him to the end, will perhaps permit me to add that the greatest character he ever created was that of Henry Irving.

**This portrait of Sir Henry Irving was taken during his visit to the Isle of Man in 1865.**

### THE LITERARY LIFE.

And now, if I am to conclude, as I am expected to do, with a few words to the younger members of my branch of the literary calling, I will say that in spite of the foolish talk about " light literature " which we too often hear from rather pretentious people who ought to know better, I have, for nearly half a century, found the profession of the story-teller a serious pursuit of which in no country and in no company have I had reason to be ashamed. It has demanded all powers, fired all my enthusiasm, developed my sympathies, enlarged my friendships, touched, amused, soothed, and comforted me. If it has been hard work, it has also been a constant inspiration, and if I had to go over my life again I should not change my calling for all the glory and more than all the emoluments of the best paid and most illustrious profession in the world.

It is indeed a profession in which the struggle of life is often keen and sometimes bitter. Open to everybody, having no tests, no diplomas, issuing no credentials, subject to internal jealousies and envies which there are no Trades Union regulations to restrain, the literary profession is perhaps the easiest of all for the rank and file to enter and the most difficult for them to rise in. On the other hand, it is a mansion whose inner chamber has many outer courts. There are hundreds of newspapers and magazines waiting day by day and week by week to be filled, and the hunger for " good copy " can never be satisfied. Every morning millions of people at their breakfast tables are saying to the people who live by the pen: "Interest me! Entertain me! Amuse me! Instruct and move me if you can!" Every day hundreds who stand by the railway bookstalls are asking for new books, and every night thousands in the theatre are calling for new plays. For the story-teller whose grip is strong, whose romance is romantic, whose pathos is pathetic, whose humour is humorous, whose power is powerful, there is an ever-increasing cry. He must learn to know his work, he must have lived and perhaps suffered, but there can be no question about the breadth of his appeal. Whether he raises his curtain on a tragedy or on a farce, in high life or in low life, on the land or on the sea, an immense audience is waiting all over the world to welcome him.

And if an older story-teller may do so (although he cannot be sure that he has always reck'd his own rede), let me urge the beginner never, under any temptation of money or time, to offer the public anything but what he sincerely believes to be his best, never to forget the exalted lines of one of the sincerest of contemporary writers, Kipling :—

*" One instant's toil to Thee denied*
*Stands all Eternity's offence " ;*

and, remembering the novelists who have gone before him, and whose heir he is, never to let down, if he can help it, the great traditions of English fiction.

# THE LAND OF MIST

OR

# The Quest of Edward Malone

By

# A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
F. E. HILEY

## XIII.

### IN WHICH PROFESSOR CHALLENGER GOES FORTH TO BATTLE.

PROFESSOR CHALLENGER was in a bad humour, and when that was so his household were made aware of it. Neither were the effects of his wrath confined to those around him, for most of those terrible letters which appeared from time to time in the Press, flaying and scarifying some unhappy opponent, were thunderbolt flashes from an offended Jove who sat in sombre majesty in his study-throne on the heights of a Victoria flat. Servants would hardly dare to enter the room where, glooming and glowering, the maned and bearded head looked up from his papers as a lion from a bone. Only Enid could dare him at such a time, and even she felt occasionally that sinking of the heart which the bravest of tamers may experience as she unbars the gate of the cage. She was not safe from the acridity of his tongue, but at least she need not fear physical violence, which was well within the possibilities for others.

Sometimes these Berserk fits of the famous Professor arose from material causes. "Hepatic, sir, hepatic!" he would explain in extenuation after some aggravated assault. But on this particular occasion he had a very definite cause for discontent. It was Spiritualism!

He never seemed to get away from the accursed superstition—a thing which ran counter to the whole work and philosophy of his lifetime. He attempted to pooh-pooh it, to laugh at it, to ignore it with contempt, but the confounded thing would insist upon obtruding itself once more. On Monday he would write it finally off his books, and before Saturday he would be up to his neck in it again. And the thing was so absurd! It seemed to him that his mind was being drawn from the great pressing material problems of the Universe in order to waste itself upon Grimm's fairy tales or the ghosts of a sensational novelist.

Then things grew worse. First Malone, who had in his simple fashion been an index figure representing the normal clear-headed human being, had in some way been bedevilled by these people and had committed himself to their pernicious views. Then Enid, his ewe-lamb, his one real link with humanity, had also been corrupted. She had agreed with Malone's conclusions. She had even hunted up a good deal of evidence of her own. In vain he had himself investigated a case and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the medium was a designing villain who brought messages from a widow's dead husband in order to get the woman into his power. It was a clear case, and Enid admitted it. But neither she nor Malone would allow any general application. "There are rogues in every line of life," they would say. "We must judge every movement by the best and not by the worst."

All this was bad enough, but worse still was in store. He had been publicly humiliated by the Spiritualists—and that by a man who admitted that he had had no education and would in any other subject in the world have been seated like a child at the Professor's feet. And yet in

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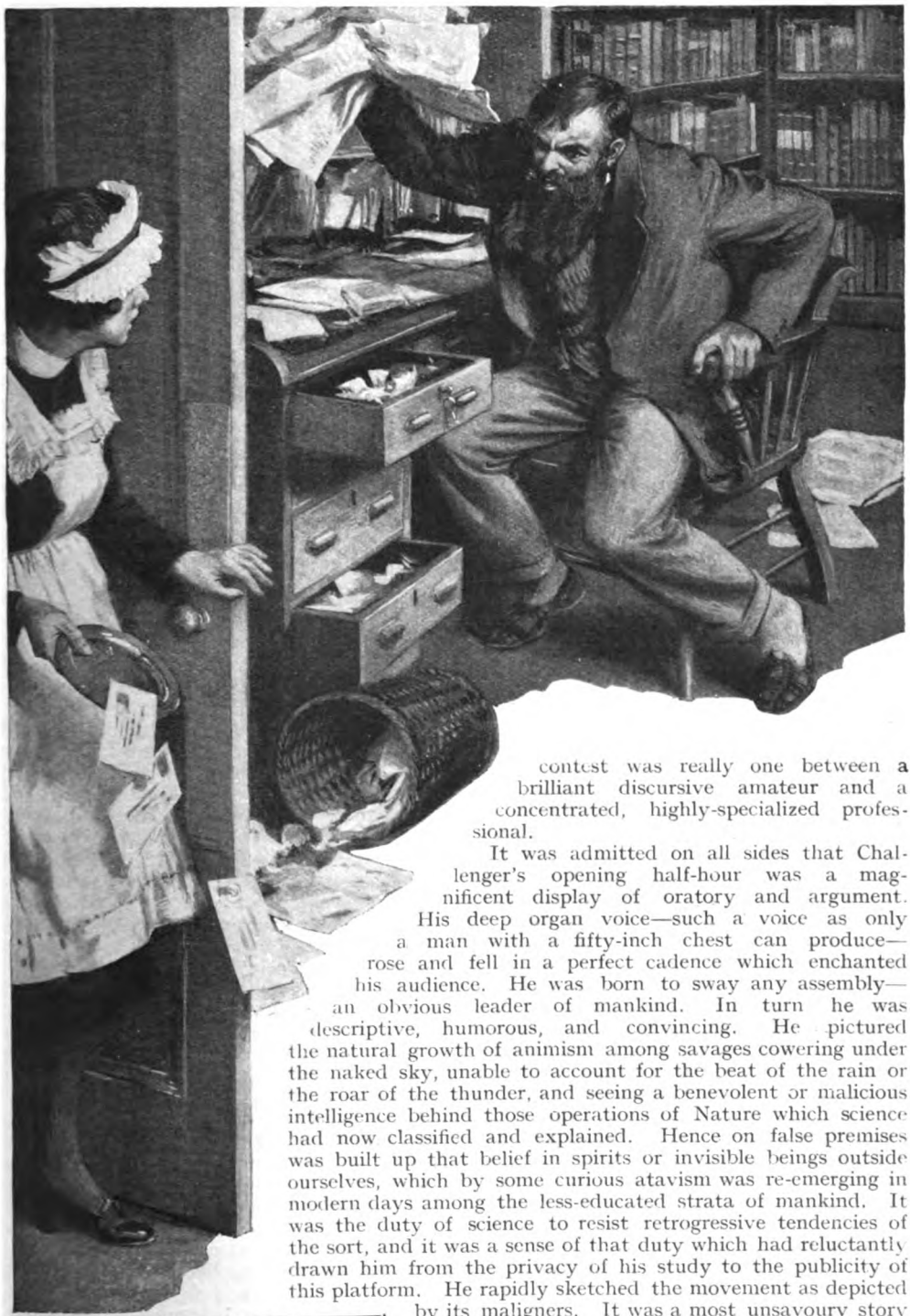
public debate—— But the story must be told.

Be it known, then, that Challenger, greatly despising all opposition and with no knowledge of the real strength of the case to be answered, had in a fatal moment actually asserted that he would descend from Olympus and would meet in debate any representative whom the other party should select. "I am well aware," he wrote, "that by such condescension I, like any other man of science of equal standing, run the risk of giving a dignity to these absurd and grotesque aberrations of the human brain which they could otherwise not pretend to claim, but we must do our duty to the public, and we must occasionally turn from our serious work and spare a moment in order to sweep away those ephemeral cobwebs which might collect and become offensive if they were not occasionally dispersed by the broom of science." Thus, in a most self-confident fashion, did Goliath go forth to meet his tiny antagonist, an ex-printer's assistant and now the editor of what Challenger would describe as an obscure Lancashire print devoted to matters of the spirit.

THE particulars of the debate are public property, and it is not necessary to tell in any great detail that painful event. It will be remembered that the great man of science went down to the Albert Hall accompanied by many rationalist sympathizers who desired to see the final destruction of the visionaries. A large number of these poor deluded creatures also attended, hoping against hope that their champion might not be entirely immolated upon the altar of outraged science. Between them the two factions filled the hall, and glared at each other with as much enmity as did the Blues and the Greens a thousand years before in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. There on the left of the platform were the solid ranks of those hard and unbending rationalists who look upon the Victorian agnostics as credulous, and refresh their faith by the periodical perusal of *The Literary Gazette* and *The Freethinker*. There, too, was Dr. Joseph Baumer, the famous lecturer upon the absurdities of religion, together with Mr. Edward Mould, who has insisted so eloquently upon man's claim to ultimate putridity of the body and extinction of the soul. On the other side Mailey's yellow beard flamed like an oriflamme. His wife sat on one side of him and Mervin, the journalist, on the other, while dense ranks of earnest men and women from the Queen Square Spiritual Alliance, from the Psychic College, from the Stead Bureau, and from the outlying churches assembled in order to encourage their champion in his hopeless task. The genial features of Bolsover, the grocer, with his Hammersmith friends, Terbane, the railway medium, the Reverend Charles Mason, with his ascetic features, Tom Linden, now happily released from bondage, Mrs. Linden, the Crewe circle, Dr. Atkinson, Lord John Roxton, Malone, and many other familiar faces were to be picked out amid that dense wall of humanity. Between the two parties, solemn and stolid and fat, sat Judge Gaverson, of the King's Bench, who had consented to preside.

It was an interesting and suggestive fact that in this critical debate, at which the very core or vital centre of real religion was the issue, the organized churches were entirely aloof and neutral. Drowsy and semi-conscious, they could not discern that the live intellect of the nation was really holding an inquisition upon their bodies to determine whether they were doomed to the extinction towards which they were rapidly drifting, or whether a resuscitation in other forms was among the possibilities of the future.

In front, on one side, with his broad-browed disciples behind him, sat Professor Challenger, portentous and threatening, his Assyrian beard projected in his most aggressive fashion, a half smile upon his lips, and his eyelids drooping insolently over his intolerant grey eyes. On the corresponding position on the other side was perched a drab and unpretentious person over whose humble head Challenger's hat would have descended to the shoulders. He was pale and apprehensive, glancing across occasionally in apologetic and deprecating fashion at his leonine opponent. Yet those who knew James Smith best were the least alarmed, for they were aware that behind his commonplace and democratic appearance there lay a knowledge of his subject, practical and theoretical, such as few living men possessed. The wise men of the Psychical Research Society are but children in psychic knowledge when compared with such practising Spiritualists as James Smith—men whose whole lives are spent in various forms of communion with the unseen. Such men often lose touch with the world in which they dwell and are useless for its everyday purposes, but the editorship of a live paper and the administration of a widespread scattered community had kept Smith's feet solid upon earth, while his excellent natural faculties, uncorrupted by useless education, had enabled him to concentrate upon the one field of knowledge which offers in itself a sufficient scope for the greatest human intellect. Little as Challenger could appreciate it, the



Servants would hardly dare to enter the room.

contest was really one between a brilliant discursive amateur and a concentrated, highly-specialized professional.

It was admitted on all sides that Challenger's opening half-hour was a magnificent display of oratory and argument. His deep organ voice—such a voice as only a man with a fifty-inch chest can produce—rose and fell in a perfect cadence which enchanted his audience. He was born to sway any assembly—an obvious leader of mankind. In turn he was descriptive, humorous, and convincing. He pictured the natural growth of animism among savages cowering under the naked sky, unable to account for the beat of the rain or the roar of the thunder, and seeing a benevolent or malicious intelligence behind those operations of Nature which science had now classified and explained. Hence on false premises was built up that belief in spirits or invisible beings outside ourselves, which by some curious atavism was re-emerging in modern days among the less-educated strata of mankind. It was the duty of science to resist retrogressive tendencies of the sort, and it was a sense of that duty which had reluctantly drawn him from the privacy of his study to the publicity of this platform. He rapidly sketched the movement as depicted by its maligners. It was a most unsavoury story as he told it, a story of cracking toe joints, of phosphorescent paint, of muslin ghosts, of a nauseous, sordid commission trade betwixt dead

men's bones on one side and widows' tears upon the other. These people were the hyenas of the human race who battened upon the graves. (Cheers from the rationalists and ironical laughter from the Spiritualists.) They were not all rogues. ("Thank you, Professor!" from a stentorian opponent.) But the others were fools. (Laughter.) Was it exaggeration to call a man a fool who believed that his grandmother could rap out absurd messages with the leg of a dining-room table? Had any savages descended to so grotesque a superstition? These people had taken dignity from death and had brought their own vulgarity into the serene oblivion of the tomb. It was a hateful business. He was sorry to have to speak so strongly, but only the knife or the cautery could deal with so cancerous a growth. Surely man need not trouble himself with grotesque speculations as to the nature of life beyond the grave. We had enough to do in this world. Life was a beautiful thing. The man who appreciated its real duties and beauties would have sufficient to employ him without dabbling in pseudo sciences which had their roots in frauds, exposed already a hundred times and yet finding fresh crowds of foolish devotees whose insane credulity and irrational prejudice made them impervious to all argument.

SUCH is a most bald and crude summary of this powerful opening argument. The materialists roared their applause; the Spiritualists looked angry and uneasy, while their spokesman rose, pale but resolute, to answer the ponderous onslaught.

His voice and appearance had none of those qualities which made Challenger magnetic, but he was clearly audible and made his points in a precise fashion like a workman who is familiar with his tools. He was so polite and so apologetic at first that he gave the impression of having been cowed. He felt that it was almost presumptuous upon one who had so little advantage of education to measure mental swords for an instant with so renowned an antagonist, one whom he had long revered. It seemed to him, however, that in the long list of the Professor's accomplishments—accomplishments which had made his name a household word throughout the world—there was one missing, and unhappily it was just this one upon which he had been tempted to speak. He had listened to that speech with admiration so far as its eloquence was concerned, but with surprise, and he might almost say with contempt, when he analysed the assertions which were contained in it. It was clear that the Professor had prepared his case by reading all the anti-Spiritualist literature which he could lay his hands upon—a most tainted source of information—while neglecting the work of those who spoke from experience and conviction.

All this talk of cracking joints and other fraudulent tricks was mid-Victorian in its ignorance, and as to the grandmother talking through the leg of a table he, the speaker, had not in thirty years of experience witnessed such a phenomenon. Such comparisons reminded one of the jokes about the dancing frogs which impeded the recognition of Volta's early electrical experiments. They were unworthy of Professor Challenger. He must surely be aware that the fraudulent medium was the worst enemy of Spiritualism, that he was denounced by name in the psychic journals whenever he was discovered, and that such exposures were usually made by the Spiritualists themselves, who had spoken of "human hyenas" as indignantly as his opponent had done. One did not condemn banks because forgers occasionally used them for nefarious purposes. It was wasting the time of so chosen an audience to descend to such a level of argument. Had Professor Challenger denied the religious implications of Spiritualism while admitting the phenomena it might have been harder to answer him, but in denying everything he had placed himself in an absolutely impossible position.

No doubt Professor Challenger had read of the recent work of Professor Richet, the famous physiologist. That work extended over thirty years. Richet had verified all the phenomena. Perhaps Professor Challenger would inform the audience what personal experience he had himself had which gave him the right to talk of Richet, or Lombroso, or Crookes as if they were superstitious savages. Possibly his opponent had conducted experiments in private of which the world knew nothing. In that case he should give them to the world. Until he did so it was unscientific and really indecent to deride men, hardly inferior in scientific reputation to himself, who actually had done such experiments and laid them before the public. As to the self-sufficiency of this world, a successful Professor with a eupeptic body might take such a view, but if one found oneself with cancer of the stomach in a London garret, one might question the doctrine that there was no need to yearn for any state of being save that in which we found ourselves.

It was a workmanlike effort illustrated with facts, dates, and figures. Though it rose to no height of eloquence, it contained much which needed an answer. And the sad fact emerged that Challenger was not in a position to answer. He had read up

his own case but had neglected that of his adversary, accepting too easily the facile and specious presumptions of incompetent writers who handled a matter which they had not themselves investigated. Instead of answering, Challenger lost his temper. The lion began to roar. He tossed his dark mane and his eyes glowed, while his deep voice reverberated through the hall. Who were these people who took refuge behind a few honoured but misguided names? What right had they to expect serious men of science to suspend their labours in order to waste time in examining their wild surmises? Some things were self-evident and did not require proof. The onus of proof lay with those who made the assertions. If this gentleman, whose name is unfamiliar, claims that he can raise spirits, let him call one up now before a sane and unprejudiced audience. If he says that he receives messages, let him give us the news in advance of the general agencies. ("It has often been done!" from the Spiritualists.) "So you say, but I deny it. I am too accustomed to your wild assertions to take them seriously." (Uproar, and Judge Gaverson upon his feet.) If he claims that he has higher inspiration, let him solve the Peckham Rye murder. If he is in touch with angelic beings, let him give us a philosophy which is higher than mortal mind can evolve. This false show of science, this camouflage of ignorance, this babble about ectoplasm and other mythical products of the psychic imagination was mere obscurantism, the bastard offspring of superstition and darkness. Wherever the matter was probed one came upon corruption and mental putrescence. Every medium was a deliberate impostor. ("You are a liar!" in a woman's voice from the neighbourhood of the Lindens.) The voices of the dead had uttered nothing but childish twaddle. The asylums were full of the supporters of the cult and would be fuller still if everyone had his due.

IT was a violent but not an effective speech. Evidently the great man was rattled. He realized that there was a case to be met and that he had not provided himself with the material wherewith to meet it. Therefore he had taken refuge in angry words and sweeping assertions, which can only be safely made when there is no antagonist present to take advantage of them. The Spiritualists seemed more amused than angry. The materialists fidgeted uneasily in their seats. Then James Smith rose for his last innings. He wore a mischievous smile. There was quiet menace in his whole bearing.

He must ask, he said, for a more scientific attitude from his illustrious opponent. It was an extraordinary fact that many scientific men, when their passions and prejudices were excited, showed a ludicrous disregard for all their own tenets. Of these tenets there was none more rigid than that a subject should be examined before it was condemned. We have seen of late years, in such matters as wireless or heavier-than-air machines, that the most unlikely things may come to pass. It is most dangerous to say *a priori* that a thing is impossible. Yet this was the error into which Professor Challenger had fallen. He had used the fame which he had rightly won in subjects which he had mastered in order to cast discredit upon a subject which he had not mastered. The fact that a man was a great physiologist and physicist did not in itself make him an authority upon psychic science.

It was perfectly clear that Professor Challenger had not read the standard works upon the subject on which he posed as an authority. Could he tell the audience what the name of Schenck Notzing's medium was? He paused for a reply. Could he then tell the name of Dr. Crawford's medium? Not? Could he tell them who had been the subject of Professor Zollner's experiments at Leipzig? What, still silent! But these were the essential points of the discussion. He had hesitated to be personal, but the Professor's robust language called for corresponding frankness upon his part. Was the Professor aware that this ectoplasm which he derided had been examined lately by twenty German Professors—the names were here for reference—and that all had testified to its existence? How could Professor Challenger deny that which these gentlemen asserted? Would he contend that they also were criminals or fools?

The fact was that the Professor had come to this hall entirely ignorant of the facts and was now learning them for the first time. He clearly had no perception that psychic science had any laws whatever, or he would not have formulated such childish requests as that an ectoplasmic figure should manifest in full light upon this platform, when every student was aware that ectoplasm was soluble in light. As to the Peckham Rye murder, it had never been claimed that the angel world was an annexe to Scotland Yard. It was mere throwing of dust in the eyes of the public for a man like Professor Challenger——

It was at this moment that the explosion occurred. Challenger had wriggled in his chair. Challenger had tugged at his beard. Challenger had glared at the speaker. Now he suddenly sprang to the side of the chairman's table with the bound of a wounded

lion. That gentleman had been lying back half asleep with his fat hands clutched across his ample paunch, but at this sudden apparition he gave a convulsive start which nearly carried him into the orchestra.

"Sit down, sir! Sit down!" he cried.

"I refuse to sit down," roared Challenger. "Sir, I appeal to you as chairman. Am I here to be insulted? These proceedings are intolerable. I will stand it no longer. If my private honour is touched I am justified in taking the matter into my own hands."

Like many men who override the opinions of others, Challenger was exceedingly sensitive when anyone took a liberty with his own. Each successive incisive sentence of his opponent had been like a barbed banderilla in the flanks of a foaming bull. Now, in speechless fury, he was shaking his huge hairy fist over the chairman's head in the direction of his adversary, whose derisive smile stimulated him to more furious plunges, with which he butted the fat president along the platform. The assembly had in an instant become a pandemonium. Half the rationalists were scandalized, while the other half shouted "Shame! Shame!" as a sign of sympathy with their champion. The Spiritualists had broken into derisive shouts, while some rushed forward to protect their champion from physical assault.

"We must get the old dear out," said Lord John Roxton to Malone. "He'll be had for manslaughter if we don't. What I mean, he's not responsible—he'll sock someone and be lagged for it."

In speechless fury Challenger was shaking his huge hairy fist in the direction of his adversary.

The platform had become a seething mob, while the auditorium was little better. Through the crush Malone and Roxton elbowed their way until they reached Challenger's side, and partly by judicious propulsion, partly by artful persuasion, they got him, still bellowing his grievances, out of the building. There was a perfunctory vote to the chairman, and the meeting broke up in riot and confusion. "The whole episode," remarked *The Times* next morning, "was a deplorable one, and forcibly illustrates the danger of public debates where the subjects are such as to inflame the prejudices of either speakers or audience. Such terms as 'Microcephalous idiot!' or 'Simian survival!' when applied by a world-renowned Professor to an opponent, illustrate the lengths to which such disputants may permit themselves to go."

THUS by a long interpolation we have got back to the fact that Professor Challenger was in the worst of humours as he sat with the above-mentioned copy of

*The Times* in his hand and a heavy scowl upon his brow. And yet it was that very moment that the injudicious Malone had chosen in order to ask him the most intimate question which one man can address to another.

Yet perhaps it is hardly fair to our friend's diplomacy to say that he had " chosen " the moment. He had really called in order to see for himself that a man for whom, in spite of his eccentricities, he had a deep reverence and affection had not suffered from the events of the night before. On that point he was speedily reassured.

" Intolerable ! " roared the Professor, in a tone so unchanged that he might have been at it all night. " You were there yourself, Malone. In spite of your inexplicable and misguided sympathy for the fatuous views of these people, you must admit that the whole conduct of the proceedings was intolerable, and that my righteous protest was more than justified. It is possible that when I threw the chairman's table at the president of the Psychic College I passed the bounds of decorum, but the provocation had been excessive. You will remember that this Smith or Brown person—his name is most immaterial—dared to accuse me of ignorance and of throwing dust in the eyes of the audience."

" Quite so," said Malone, soothingly. " Never mind, Professor. You got in one or two pretty hard knocks yourself."

Challenger's grim features unbent and he rubbed his hands with glee.

" Yes, yes, I fancy that some of my thrusts went home. I imagine that they will not be forgotten. When I said that the asylums would be full if every man of them had his due, I could see them wince. They all yelped, I remember, like a kennelful of puppies. It was their preposterous claim that I should read their hare-brained literature which caused me to display some little heat. But I hope, my boy, that you have called round this morning in order to tell me that what I said last night has had some effect upon your own mind, and that you have reconsidered these views, which are, I confess, a considerable tax upon our friendship."

Malone took his plunge like a man.

" I had something else in my mind when I came here," said he. " You must be aware that your daughter Enid and I have been thrown together a good deal of late. To me, sir, she has become the one woman in the world, and I shall never be happy until she is my wife. I am not rich, but a good sub-editorship has been offered to me, and I could well afford to marry. You have known me for some time, and I hope you have nothing against me. I trust, therefore, that I may count upon your approval in what I am about to do."

Challenger stroked his beard and his eyelids drooped dangerously over his eyes.

" My perceptions," said he, " are not so dull that I should have failed to observe the relations which have been established between my daughter and yourself. This question, however, has become entangled with that other which we were discussing. You have both, I fear, imbibed this poisonous fallacy, which I am more and more inclined to devote my life to extirpating. If only on the ground of eugenics, I could not give my sanction to a union which was built up on such a foundation. I must ask you, therefore, for a definite assurance that your views have become more sane. I shall ask the same from her."

AND so Malone suddenly found himself also enrolled among the noble army of martyrs. It was a hard dilemma, but he faced it like the man that he was.

" I am sure, sir, that you would not think the better of me if I allowed my views as to truth, whether they be right or wrong, to be swayed by material considerations. I cannot change my opinions even to win Enid. I am sure that she would take the same view."

" Did you not think I had the better last night ? "

" I thought your address was very eloquent."

" Did I not convince you ? "

" Not in the face of the evidence of my own senses."

" Any conjurer could deceive your senses."

" I fear, sir, that my mind is made up on this point."

" Then my mind is made up also," roared Challenger, with a sudden glare. " You will leave this house, sir, and you will return when you have regained your sanity."

" One moment ! " said Malone. " I beg, sir, that you will not be precipitate. I value your friendship too much to risk the loss of it if it can, in any way, be avoided. Possibly, if I had your guidance, I should better understand these things that puzzle me. If I should be able to arrange it, would you mind being present personally at one of these demonstrations, so that your own trained powers of observation may throw a light upon the things that have puzzled me ? "

Challenger was enormously open to flattery. He plumed and preened himself now like some great bird.

" If, my dear Malone, I can help you to

get this taint—what shall we call it?—*microbus spiritualensis*—out of your system, I am at your service. I shall be happy to devote a little of my spare time to exposing those specious fallacies to which you have fallen so easy a victim. I would not say that you are entirely devoid of brains, but that your good nature is liable to be imposed upon. I warn you that I shall be an exacting inquirer and bring to the investigation those laboratory methods of which it is generally admitted that I am a master."

"That is what I desire."

"Then you will prepare the occasion and I shall be there. But meanwhile you will clearly understand that I insist upon a promise that this association with my daughter shall go no farther."

Malone hesitated.

"I give my promise for six months," he said at last.

As Malone emerged upon the landing Enid appeared.

"And what will you do at the end of that time?"

"I will decide when the time comes," Malone answered, diplomatically, and so escaped from a dangerous situation with more credit than at one time seemed probable.

It chanced that, as he emerged upon the landing, Enid, who had been engaged in her morning's shopping, appeared in the lift. Malone's easy Irish conscience allowed him to think that the six months need not start on the instant, so he persuaded Enid to descend in the lift with him. It was one of those lifts which are handled by whoever uses them, and on this occasion it so happened that it stuck between the landing-stages, and that in spite of several impatient rings it remained stuck for a good quarter of an hour. When at last the machinery resumed its functions, and when Enid was able at last to reach her home and Malone the street, the lovers had prepared themselves to wait for six months with every hope of a successful end to their experiment.

(*To be continued.*)

# The Great Bardolph

By

## LAURENCE CLARKE

*ILLUSTRATED BY LEO BATES*

I.

IT was Bardolph Quinn's ambition to be acclaimed head of "The Profession." Some, but not all, of the qualities which might help him to adorn that position were indubitably his. His theatre was London's most sumptuous and beautiful playhouse, his Rolls-Royce car was an eccentricity in colour and mascot, and his clothes were the joy of the cartoonists. The flaw lay in his acting. Unceasingly his acting was the target of the most knowing of critics. They knew he could not act. In chorus, over a period of twenty years, they gave their views on the subject to the world and his wife, and the man in the street. But, obtusely and pertinaciously, the world and his wife, and the man in the street, continued to frequent Bardolph's playhouse; drawn thither, no doubt, by the actor's large, queer, exuberant, and flamboyant personality.

Soured and impecunious actors proclaimed aloud that Quinn was a vain and successful fool.

"My dear boy," they said in the Bodega, "he can't act for little apples."

And to this day the question whether the great Bardolph could act, or not, remains a mystery. Grandiose in person, Bardolph affected the grandiose in drama. Vast, heroic parts drew him as a magnet. "You can always get old Bardolph if you put him in a toga and let him show his calves," was a gibe which pleased him rather than otherwise.

Bardolph had been successful for years when the glittering part of Cardinal Rohan at last stamped him as a public figure. He had arrived! He had more than arrived! He was even over-ripe on the tree, when a thrilling typed note summoned him to Buckingham Palace and a knighthood. It had been said that he had angled for this honour for thirty years. When it came, however, he was as genuinely astonished as he was delighted. And, as a sort of thank-offering to the world, he produced "Lear."

"Lear" is a loser, but the part—well, the part had held Bardolph's covetous eye for a decade. He would do Lear as it had never been done before. His beautiful theatre would become a shrine, a temple. Atmosphere! At last should the British public know something of Atmosphere.

Every yard of floor, wall, and sky space of his exquisite playhouse should be of Period, a remote period, harsh, barbaric. And within this perfect scene, which should embrace audience and players, he would deliver his tragic philosophy. He knew the sort of king Lear would be. He would show the world. He was determined to live up to that knighthood, if it cost every penny he possessed.

The moment Sir Bardolph Quinn announced that he intended to play Lear the shocked cognoscenti laughed, scoffed, or advised him. They always did that when he announced a new part. Particularly offensive were those helpful critics who quoted the past. One William Hazlitt was a favourite weapon in the hands of the great *Morning Guardian*. *The Morning Guardian* quoted the defunct Hazlitt *ad nauseam*.

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But this time Bardolph had his own ideas—he would show them. And feverishly he went to work. The company he got together would take some beating. He allowed young Horace Ford, his publicity manager, to tell the Press that the cast was the most expensive on any stage, and that the new interior decorations, solely designed for the piece, would cost fifteen thousand pounds.

"Thirty!" put in Horace Ford.

"Fordy boy," Bardolph reminded him, "that's your end of the business. You are paid to titillate their curiosity. I leave it to you. Make it thirty!"

The resourceful Ford made a note in his book.

"What about the production?" he asked.

"This time," said Sir Bardolph, "I'm going to knock the highbrows. A barbaric setting, Jimmy, something new—understand me? Stark, and with a shudder in it. And in that big scene, rocks and real ice."

"Real ice?" repeated Ford.

Sir Bardolph Quinn nodded.

"You'll be able to feel the cold, Fordy boy."

But the publicity manager did not like that.

"It'll give the critics a handle to get funny," he said. "They'll see the ice, and talk about a frost."

Sir Bardolph was checked. He paused in thought. It was true, they were always clever like that, they always got him somewhere and laughed. His large floridity became enshadowed in gloom. But his soul yearned for real ice.

"Damn, damn 'em all! Fordy! I'll do it, though. Let them laugh."

He drew a deep breath.

"And the part suits me, it *is* me. I've never had a part like it. My boy, I've loved it for years." He crossed his littered dressing-room and threw back the curtain of his wardrobe. "Look at this toga. Well, not exactly what you might call a toga, but look at it!" He held up a kingly vestment. "I wear this in the fifth act. Come down over the rocks in it, old, desolate—but a king, my lad, a king."

The young man made a thoughtful grimace.

"That strip of purple, Sir Bardolph?" he dubiously inquired.

"A king, Fordy boy, King Lear, royal, philosophic. Nothing for the groundlings and the *hoi polloi*. I come over the ice——"

"Not real ice, Sir Bardolph," Jimmy Ford protested sturdily. "We could never get away with it."

A change came over Sir Bardolph's face, a queer ruefulness. He hesitated, looking at himself in the long strip of mirror which had pictured him in all his greatest parts. Reluctantly he gave in.

"It isn't much of an idea, that ice, after all. Is it, Fordy? Childish, eh? Well, we'll cut it out."

Relief came into the publicity manager's face.

"This time, Horace boy," said Sir Bardolph, "we must keep on the high, dignified note—reticent, that's the word. New word for me, eh?"

He paused thoughtfully, his gaze still upon his reflection in the mirror.

"You think they'll cut me up as usual, laddie?"

"It's a game with them," the young man gloomily admitted.

"They think I can't act!"

"They say it. Whether they think it or not, I don't know."

"I'd like to win 'em, Fordy."

"Perhaps you will."

"No! They've started telling me already. *The Morning Guardian* has a column this morning, 'On Some Preposterous Actor-Managers!' Look at it."

He reached forward to his dressing-table, and handed the sheet to the other.

"Asks me almost by name if I know that Lear is a part requiring subtlety and a sense of history. Says the effects will, no doubt, be excellent. . . . Curse 'em," Bardolph concluded, his face scarlet with rage. Then suddenly he subsided and relapsed into his seat, a prey to dejection.

"The more they say before the night, the less they can say after," said Ford, offering philosophy as balm in a hopeless case.

THE night came. A brilliant scene. For on a first night Sir Bardolph Quinn could always pack his large and sumptuous theatre. The interior decorations won commendation even from the critics, but the acting——

"Sir Bardolph—why does he blazon his knighthood on the bills?—strutted through the part of the agonized king. He made his exits and entrances with the emphasis of a Roman Conqueror. But it was not King Lear. In the words of Hazlitt: 'Lear is an aloof and enswathed figure of greatness. A mind gradually darkened by wrong-doing . . .'"

This in *The Morning Guardian*, the powerful organ of the stalls, the dress circle, and the boxes. And the other dailies were in the same key. All scathing, all as funny as possible, at his expense. *The Daily Gazette* said:—

"A pity! Why does not Sir Bardolph give us something wherein his undoubted personal popularity with the groundlings would stand him in stead? If only for once he could be quiet, dignified, restrained."

The organ of the intelligentsia, after a

suave crescendo of cruel invective, written by a man of letters, asked portentously :—

"Has Sir Bardolph never heard of James McAlpine?"

Sir Bardolph read this and the other Press notices in bed the next morning. His Tudor four-poster, spread with a rich eiderdown of purple and black, was littered with newspapers. At the foot of the bed, his hand on a bedpost, one foot crossed over another, leaned Horace Ford, tremulous, eager, nervous, and infuriate. They had certainly gone for the old man this time.

In bed, sitting up in a Bakst suit of pyjamas, a blend of rainbow colours, with his reddish head and red face aglow, Bardolph made a melancholy figure. Every member of his cast had been mentioned with commendation save himself.

"What does it matter, Sir Bardolph, what they say?" soothed the publicity manager. "You've got your public."

Sir Bardolph glowered and sucked in his lips.

"Who's this McAlpine?" he asked.

"They tell me he did Lear in the 'eighties. His name's a legend to me."

"Was he such a wonder?"

"Don't know," glowered Ford; "better ask him!"

"God, is he still alive?"

"Was a few months ago, is now, for all I know; must be nearly eighty."

Bardolph fell into thought.

"I'd like to see him."

He stirred and put out of bed a leg which looked as if it were clad in fireworks. "Tell Joseph to come and dress me. It's late; what time is it?"

"Twelve o'clock."

"Where does this McAlpine hang out?"

Horace Ford shook his head. He did not know, but he could easily discover.

Joseph, Sir Bardolph's Austrian valet, entered, and with self-effacing dexterity and swiftness clad his master for the day.

"Not those shepherd's plaid bags to-day, Joseph; something less conspicuous," said the knight. His mood was subdued; evidently some of the reticence left over from last night was still extant.

"What does it matter, Sir Bardolph, what they say?"

Young Ford, who had been absent for ten minutes, came into the room with James McAlpine's address on a slip of paper. Sir Bardolph, who was now seated at the dressing-table with Joseph tying his necktie, glanced at it.

"He must have come down in the world a bit, eh, Ford?"

"Looks like it," Ford answered.

"Have the car round and come with me. I want to see this James McAlpine. Do me good, no doubt, to look at the only man who could ever play Lear!"

soothed the publicity manager. "You've got your public."

Ford laughed dutifully and sympathetically, then accompanied his master downstairs.

Joseph, the Austrian valet, stayed behind and gathered together twelve newspapers, all of which reminded Sir Bardolph Quinn that he was not an actor. And, least of all, they reminded him, was he an actor who might dare to lay hands upon the Bard's most majestic creation.

II.

"HERE we are," said Ford. The big car had halted at a featureless dim house in Kilburn. Sir Bardolph moved the rug from his knees, descended, and, with Ford as pendant to his progress, rang the bell.

"Will you tell Mr. McAlpine that Sir Bardolph Quinn would like to see him for a few moments upon a matter of business?"

"Business?" repeated Ford, looking up at his master.

"I said business," Bardolph answered him.

For in the car Bardolph had been thinking. An original and a quite fascinating and provocative plan had clarified itself in his mind.

"Business," he repeated.

The woman who had opened the door eyed the superb four-hundred-guinea overcoat, the grey Homburg hat, the gloved hands, and gold-headed cane. And behind all this splendour, lending effulgence to the street, she glimpsed Sir Bardolph's Rolls-Royce.

"I'll tell him," she answered, in accents of awe, and went away, leaving the actor and his friend upon the threshold.

Three minutes later Sir Bardolph, hat in hand, and followed by Horace Ford, stepped into the abode of the other Lear. Here he saw a man, brisk and sharp-eyed, but with the mark of his seventy-five years apparent in his thin, grey hair and stooping figure. The

room in which the old actor sat looked out upon a blank wall, a messy rabbit-hutch, and hens pecking in a backyard that was all ugliness. The room itself was shabby, poorly furnished, and odoriferous of bacon, for a breakfast had been recently cooked on a Dutch oven before the fire.

James McAlpine, in shirt-sleeves, rose from a leather arm-chair and laid aside a newspaper.

"I am Sir Bardolph Quinn," Bardolph introduced himself. "I hope I am not disturbing you, Mr. McAlpine?"

"No; come in. Sit down," McAlpine responded. Apparently he was not impressed, rather was he watchful and suspicious. Fate had dealt not too gently with the old man, and at the new approach of anything strange or unfamiliar his defences went up. "What's his game?" he wondered. "Why should Sir Bardolph come to see me?"

Sir Bardolph's jealous, alert eyes had taken in the picture of Macready over the mantelshelf, of Phelps, and of a bearded figure in a nondescript garment, which last, he guessed, was that of McAlpine himself in the famous character.

"I'm playing Lear," Sir Bardolph announced.

His too-splendid hat and glistening, gold-headed cane lay upon the corner of McAlpine's tablecloth. He smiled his well-known twisted smile. There had been a time when ladies, seeing that smile, had parted instantly and joyously with whatever of heart they possessed.

"You've never been to see me?" His eyebrows went up in another well-known gesture.

"I don't go out much."

Things were not going exactly as Sir Bardolph had expected. There was "no kick" in the situation, and whatever of bonhomie or suavity was abroad in the room was of his own making. He was hurt. He was indeed somewhat shocked. Could it be possible that this man truly understood that Sir Bardolph Quinn was actually a visitor in his abode?

"I understand," he began, "that you yourself, Mr. McAlpine, played Lear very successfully?"

McAlpine looked at him with his old, sharp eyes.

"I did, a hundred and fifty nights, and that beats anything you're likely to do!"

"Old, spiteful, and disappointed," commented Sir Bardolph inwardly. But he would not retreat; he had maintained his smile.

"I have come to make you a proposition," he said. Then, without beating about the bush, and gently caressing a grey suède glove on his crossed knee, he offered the old man the hospitality of his theatre. He offered him his superb company, his appointments, and the brilliant gifts of his publicity manager for the period of one night. "If you care to play my part, Mr. McAlpine, for one night, I'll see to it that all London is there to witness the performance. And as to emolument"—he paused here, intimidated by the sharp eye of the other—"as to emolument, you can dispose of the takings of that night in such manner as you choose."

A PAUSE ensued. The sharpness went out of McAlpine's gaze. Something of wonderment troubled his old features.

"Say that again, Sir Bardolph," he asked, almost, it seemed, with a touch of wistful pathos in his tone. It was not credible, this sudden and astounding invitation. For fifteen years, since a stroke had lamed him slightly, he had not acted at all; for thirty years he had never been upon a London stage. The generosity of the most generous of professions had kept him alive. He was not, he thought, remembered by more than a dozen London playgoers, but, of course, he knew his business. The theatre and dramatic art, as he knew it, were dead and gone. Often he had longed for a chance, some fortuitous shuffle of fortune's cards, which would enable him to show them. Yes, he would like to show them!

Sir Bardolph renewed his invitation in detail, and paused.

"Then you accept, Mr. McAlpine?"

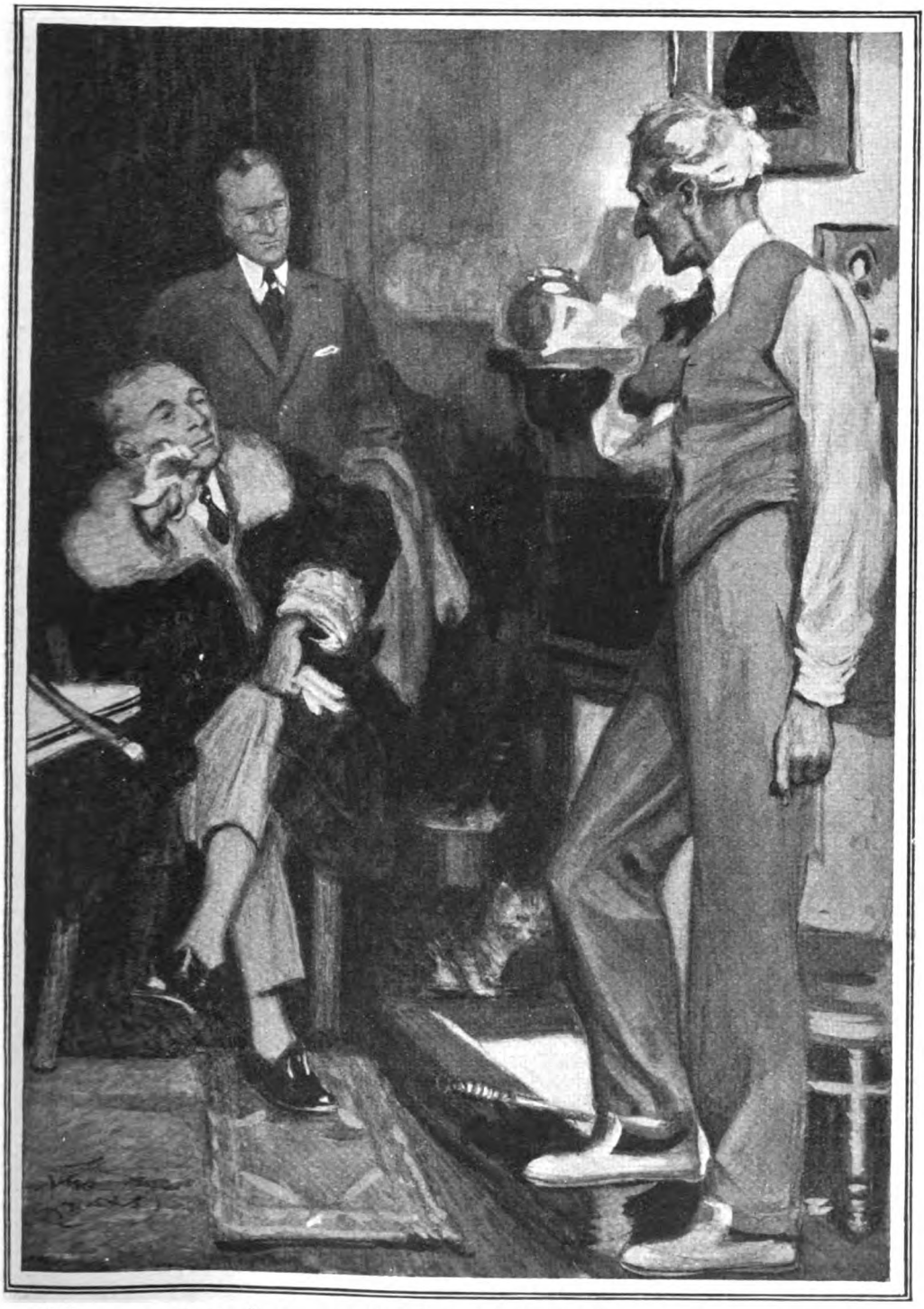
McAlpine laughed for the first time, the laugh of a truly old man.

"I was thirty-five," he said, "when I last played Lear at the old Princess's——"

"You must have a talk with Mr. Ford here about those days," interjected Sir Bardolph, at ease at last and his own exuberant self again. "Mr. Ford, my publicity manager, will turn your stories, Mr. McAlpine, into stimulating 'copy.'"

"Ah!" exclaimed McAlpine enigmatically, and turned his old, bright eye upon Ford. He had heard of the tremendous doings of publicity managers, and this was the first of the clan he had seen in the flesh.

The thought came into Bardolph's eased mind that he would give McAlpine a framed portrait of himself, which he could hang among those others over the mantelshelf. He began to like the old man, even to admire his sturdy dignity. He had expected a slavish acquiescence, and the old man had been almost casual. But perhaps, when he came to think about it at leisure, he would realize that a miracle had occurred.



"If you care to play my part," said Sir Bardolph, "for one night, I'll see to it that all London is there to witness the performance."

When Sir Bardolph was outside, and, enveloped in his rich fur coat, was gliding from Kilburn towards his mansion in Pont Street, he questioned Ford.

"What do you make of my plan, Fordy?"

"I give it up," replied Ford. "I suppose I can do something with the publicity, but——"

Sir Bardolph Quinn waved a hand.

"I don't think of that, Fordy; my sole idea is to present the public with a genuine picture of the old Lear, as against the new. The critics, you must remember, say that he was wonderful."

III.

FORD, resourceful and energetic publicity agent as he was, had made mountains out of mole hills. The romantic history of McAlpine's youth and fame had decorated the pages of the entire London Press. A unique, a brilliant, a splendid, a most provocative idea, this of letting the great man of the past restrut the boards in the greatest of old men parts!

On the night of McAlpine's appearance the critics were there in force, a formidable array. Sir Bardolph, from his spyhole in the wings, could see the great man of *The Morning Guardian*, so classically witty, so fertile and dexterous in scathing phrase. Then there was the big-headed young man of *The Daily Gazette*, a dangerous fellow this. Well, they had asked for McAlpine, and now they had him. What would they do with the situation? He wondered.

He turned and hurried back to his dressing-room as the first twitter of fiddles arose from his concealed orchestra. In the chair that was sacred to himself, before his own mirror, an old man, by the dexterity of his trusted 'dresser," Towle, was being lifted to the eminence of a king. Age itself had been at work upon James McAlpine only too well, but that was not enough for Towle. Theatrical convention, the public, and McAlpine himself required more than that.

Sir Bardolph, his back to the closed door, emitted splendour even in the reticent black and white of evening clothes. He felt strange, too, at this hour, in evening clothes. None of his plays ever required that sort of garb. But for one night he was a man of leisure, a gentleman at large in his own theatre.

"You look fine," he said, as McAlpine rose from Towle's hands and slipped into the long, out-dated costume that had been the "Lear" convention two generations earlier. "How are you feeling?"

"Never felt better," McAlpine assured him. There had been three rehearsals, and the old man had every time come through easily. Beneath the theatrical hues of age there was a flush on McAlpine's cheeks, a bright excitement in his sharp eyes.

"What's the time?" he asked.

"You've got another ten minutes before your call. Won't you take a 'pick-me-up,' or anything like that?" Sir Bardolph suggested.

McAlpine shook his head. Standing before the tall slip of mirror let into the wall, he eyed his aged reflection critically. He was impressed, as well he might be, by the skill of Towle. Sir Bardolph's own reputation for masterful make-up rested indeed solely in the hands of Towle, who was a wonder.

Sir Bardolph drew open the door an inch or two; the twitter of fiddles, a ghost of sound, reached them.

"I'll take you along to the wings," said Bardolph.

Through a labyrinth of pink-washed corridors he led the other Lear, and presently together the two stood in the wings. McAlpine looked out upon the great stage broken up into property rocks, a waterfall, and a sloping moorland. Shapes, not too clearly defined, moved and spoke.

"I call it acting in the dark," the old man commented in candid criticism.

"It's the fashion," whispered Sir Bardolph.

"In my day a 'spot' met me when I made my entrance and never left me. I *lived* in it."

In the nebulous distance a call-boy appeared running.

"Now," said Sir Bardolph.

A moment later a hurricane of applause swept the auditorium of the famous theatre. McAlpine was receiving that which surpassed his wildest dreams. A reception such as he had never received before and could never receive again. The Press work of Ford had lifted him into a public idol.

He began his part, and from the wings Sir Bardolph watched him, listening, eyeing the still multitude facing the stage. Below, far back and high up, they were motionless, save for the occasional movement of a hand, the twirl of a programme.

McAlpine was doing well, there were points in his performance. But his voice, it could never carry, it would never reach up there, that high spot at which he, Bardolph, habitually pitched his fine notes. Nevertheless, whatever came of it, the occasion was unique. The old man came off, applause again. He was trembling.

Bardolph met him; the drama of the moment had carried him away, he forgot his own situation, the menace to his reputation. He laid a kindly hand on McAlpine's arm.

"You're going great," he said.

McAlpine laughed his pleasure, and his aged head wagged a little. Once again he was on the stage. Ford slipped up behind Bardolph.

"They can't hear a word," he said. "There'll be trouble in a minute."

old man's form was limp, his eyes were closed, his right leg twitched and lay still.

Two minutes later a physician in evening clothes hurried in from the stalls.

"Good evening, Sir Bardolph. So this is the patient?"

**As Bardolph dashed to the whisky decanter he heard the fall of a body behind him.**

"The scene's over," whispered Bardolph, and turned to see McAlpine coming towards him at his exit. It seemed to him that the old man moved unsteadily.

When McAlpine reached the dressing-room he relapsed heavily on to Bardolph's settee. The sharp, bright eyes had taken on a strained expression, a queer, intent, inward expression. Bardolph, who had followed, noticed that his hands fluttered upon his knees.

"I'll take——" said James McAlpine, "give me a drink!"

There was urgency in his tone. And as Bardolph dashed to the whisky decanter he heard the fall of a body behind him, the body of James McAlpine. The old man had slipped to the floor and lay there huddled, his face upon the worn carpet. Bardolph lifted him and replaced him at full length on the settee.

"My God!" he exclaimed aloud, for the

Sir Bardolph's face was tragic.

"Will he get better?" he asked. "He told me he had had a stroke before, some years ago. His right leg was affected for a time."

"He may get better," the doctor said, "but it will be a long, slow business."

The doctor and Bardolph were old friends. Bardolph had recognized the physician in the stalls earlier in the evening, and had sent for him in his emergency.

"Then he can't act again to-night?"

"My dear Bardolph, he'll never act again."

Bardolph sat heavily in a chair, and glanced at the small gold clock on the table, a treasured presentation in token of royal esteem.

"I suppose he's got an understudy?" said the doctor, with professional indifference.

Sir Bardolph bit his lip.

"Yes, but——"

" I must take his blood pressure," said the doctor, " and later I shall probably have to bleed him. He'll be all right where he is until I come back."

A minute later he was gone. Sir Bardolph Quinn was alone with the prone figure. McAlpine was lying outstretched, grotesquely like a broken toy, a king cast aside and done with. And outside, the cognoscenti and the great ones of London would soon be awaiting him. A tragic, queer fate. A queer end to an interesting business. Bardolph caught his own reflection in the long mirror. A smile twisted his lips. Ford would make something out of this, he had no doubt. He glanced at McAlpine, at the work of Towle upon those already old features. In a few moments the house would be waiting. What a situation of tragedy and drama! Terrible! Terrible! And then slowly an idea formed in Bardolph's brain. He glanced in the mirror and once again at his companion. A moment later he snatched open the door and roared out into the passage for his dresser.

" Towle! Towle! "

Towle came running. Sir Bardolph gripped his arm.

" When's the next call? " he demanded.

" In twelve minutes, sir."

" I'll take it. Shut the door. Lock it."

" Yes, sir? "

" Hurry, you fool! "

TWELVE minutes later, to the subdued whisper of violins, King Lear made his entrance again upon the waiting, tense audience.

" I must go slow," thought Bardolph. " I must begin on the note he left off on. We shall see what we shall see."

He was thrilled as he had never been thrilled before. Towle had been brilliant. The call-boy even had not recognized him. He began to act, suppressing his own mannerisms that were hall-marked, and continuing the part as he conceived James McAlpine would have played it. He tried to live himself into the skin of McAlpine, that queer, sharp-eyed relic of the past whose robes he wore, who now lay prone, suspended between this world and another. He played a scene, a second scene, and gradually opened out his notes. But for once he was not playing his own King Lear. A thought trickled into his mind. What if he were indeed Lear, if he were rendering from the inside the part which he knew so well from the outside? McAlpine had brains, no doubt of that, but not the appearance, not the voice. . . . He made an exit, a roar of applause greeted him. Peering swiftly out from the wings he could see Gopher, the great man of *The Morning Guardian*, pinching the end of his nose, a peculiar gesture of perplexity.

" Gopher's puzzled," thought Bardolph.

In the dressing-room he found the old man still unconscious and the doctor in a chair beside him.

" His blood pressure is two hundred," said the doctor.

" Is he conscious? " Bardolph asked.

" No! "

He was on the stage again, bereft, alone, drifting to his doom amid those terrible daughters. But he was putting it across. He knew he had them now. Wearing the make-up and the queerly-cut, Druid-like costume of McAlpine's Lear, he was still cautious. He was still nervous of overstepping the mark, of letting that flamboyancy of his kill a performance that was becoming a work of art.

The end came, he was off the stage. His heart dropped heavily. Not a sound! He stood rigid, and then it came. They were calling for—McAlpine.

" McAlpine! McAlpine! McAlpine! "

He turned, and with a queer mixture of emotion went to his dressing-room.

Towle touched him on the arm.

" What shall we do, sir? "

" Tell Mr. Shepherd to go on and tell them that Mr. McAlpine is too exhausted by his effort to appear, but thanks them. Say something graceful."

Towle disappeared, closing the door.

Bardolph turned the key in the lock.

THE newspapers next morning were queer reading for Sir Bardolph Quinn. Lying in his great bed in his mansion in Pont Street, news sheets covered his counterpane. At the foot of the bed, a hand resting on one of its pillars, one foot crossed over another, stood Ford, his publicity manager. A satirical grin widened his already wide mouth.

" We've got 'em, got 'em cold. I can prove to the world, Sir Bardolph," he said, " that you are England's greatest actor. It says so in *The Morning Guardian*."

" It says McAlpine," ruefully put in Sir Bardolph.

" I'll prove that you played the part. There's never been anything like it in the history of the profession. Why, Sir Bardolph, you'll become a god! " he exclaimed, enlarging the metaphors in his excitement. " Don't you see what you can make of it? ' The Great Heart of Sir Bardolph. What he did. How he took on the part. How he said nothing. How only three persons, the doctor, Towle, and Mr. Horace Ford, the publicity agent, knew that he had played the part. Audience absolutely deceived. And the success—tremendous! ' "

Sir Bardolph put a hand to his forehead.

"Tell me how McAlpine's taking it?" he asked.

"He's sitting up in bed, miles better," said Ford. "And he's *eating* the news. He thinks he played the part himself. He doesn't know what happened last night after he had collapsed."

"He's happy?"

"Happy? I've never seen anything like it."

Sir Bardolph drew in a deep breath. The fundamental generosity which lay beneath his flamboyance flowered in him.

Ford paced the floor, absorbed in the immense *réclame* he would make out of this. In the history of publicity there had never been a chance like it. It would be the talk of Europe. And the laugh was all Bardolph's, all Bardolph's, and his——

Sir Bardolph's rich accents broke in on the torrent of his thoughts.

"Fordy boy, you must not say a word about all this."

"What?"

"Not a word. Let the old man enjoy his success."

Ford's mouth fell open, he was aghast.

"My God, don't you see what you are throwing away? You've got 'em all cold. It's the biggest thing in the world. They'll love you for it. I——"

"Fordy," Sir Bardolph checked him quietly. His voice was deep and resigned. "I'd like to make a gesture for once, something quiet, dignified, and restrained. And though I don't think much of old Jimmy as an actor, he's a sport, and he shall have his little hour."

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# ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 150.

(*The Second of the Series.*)

Two well-known stations here we see.
Whence you may travel south or west;
And each of them, you will agree,
A victory may well suggest.

1. By many made, by many also broken.
2. Here is a thought, conveyed when words are spoken.

3. The outer surface of what's often eaten.
4. This flies; no wonder! For it's often beaten.

5. Reverse this light, and last will now be first.
6. Thrust back; or man with foul disease, reversed.

7. A treacherous villain on the scene appears:
8. Behead him, and we see the bygone years.

VIPER.

*Answers to Acrostic No. 150 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on January 11th.*

*To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.*

Solvers who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should, with their letters, enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and he will endeavour to reply.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 149.

THE simple joys of Christmastide
Acrostic themes may well provide.
The former? Pull one, and mayhap
A ring rewards you, or a cap.
The latter? Happiness is met
By those who give, and those who get.

1. Mix up a fruit, it is not dear.
2. Your breakfast bacon should be here.

3. A Queen of England, now long dead.
4. A King of England lost his head.

5. Cattle, a little more than kin.
6. Odd number, play the game, and win.

7. Ponder, what does the mirror do?
8. Letters are six, and blades are two.

PAX.

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For the last light of No. 146, "Rubber" must be admitted as correct. Neither "Respirator" nor "Rubber" produces absolute silence; both cause a great diminution of sound.

# A Bit of Luck for Mabel

By

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

*ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER*

"LIFE, laddie," said Ukridge, "is very rum."

He had been lying for some time silent on the sofa, his face towards the ceiling; and I had supposed that he was asleep. But now it appeared that it was thought, not slumber, that had caused his unwonted quietude.

"Very, very rum," said Ukridge.

He heaved himself up and stared out of the window. The sitting-room window of the cottage which I had taken in the country looked upon a stretch of lawn, backed by a little spinney; and now there stole in through it from the waking world outside that first cool breeze which heralds the dawning of a summer day.

"Great Scott!" I said, looking at my watch. "Do you realize you've kept me up talking all night?"

Ukridge did not answer. There was a curious, far-away look on his face, and he uttered a sound like the last gurgle of an expiring soda-water siphon; which I took to be his idea of a sigh. I saw what had happened. There is a certain hour at the day's beginning which brings with it a strange magic, tapping wells of sentiment in the most hard-boiled. In this hour, with the sun pinking the eastern sky and the early bird chirping over its worm, Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, that battered man of wrath, had become maudlin; and, instead of being allowed to go to bed, I was in for some story of his murky past.

"Extraordinarily rum," said Ukridge. "So is Fate. It's curious to think, Corky, old horse, that if things had not happened as they did I might now be a man of tremendous importance, looked up to and respected by all in Singapore."

"Why should anyone respect you in Singapore?"

"Rolling in money," proceeded Ukridge, wistfully.

"You?"

"Yes, me. Did you ever hear of one of those blokes out East who didn't amass a huge fortune? Of course you didn't. Well, think what I should have done, with my brain and vision. Mabel's father made a perfect pot of money in Singapore, and I don't suppose he had any vision whatsoever."

"Who was Mabel?"

"Haven't I ever spoken to you of Mabel?"

"No. Mabel who?"

"I won't mention names."

"I hate stories without names."

"You'll have this story without names—and like it," said Ukridge with spirit. He sighed again. A most unpleasant sound. "Corky, my boy," he said, "do you realize on what slender threads our lives hang? Do you realize how trifling can be the snags on which we stub our toes as we go through this world? Do you realize——"

"Get on with it."

"In my case it was a top-hat."

"What was a top-hat?"

"The snag."

"You stubbed your toe on a top-hat?"

"Figuratively, yes. It was a top-hat which altered the whole course of my life."

"You never had a top-hat."

"Yes, I did have a top-hat. It's absurd for you to pretend that I never had a top-

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hat. You know perfectly well that when I go to live with my Aunt Julia in Wimbledon I roll in top-hats—literally roll."

"Oh, yes, when you go to live with your aunt."

"Well, it was when I was living with her that I met Mabel. The affair of the top-hat happened——"

I looked at my watch again.

"I can give you half an hour," I said. "After that I'm going to bed. If you can condense Mabel into a thirty-minute sketch, carry on."

"This is not quite the sympathetic attitude I should like to see in an old friend, Corky."

"It's the only attitude I'm capable of at half-past three in the morning. Snap into it."

Ukridge pondered.

"It's difficult to know where to begin."

"Well, to start with, who was she?"

"She was the daughter of a bloke who ran some sort of immensely wealthy business in Singapore."

"Where did she live?"

"In Onslow Square."

"Where were you living?"

"With my aunt in Wimbledon."

"Where did you meet her?"

"At a dinner-party at my aunt's."

"You fell in love with her at first sight?"

"Yes."

"For awhile it seemed that she might return your love?"

"Exactly."

"And then one day she saw you in a top-hat and the whole thing was off. There you are. The entire story in two minutes fifteen seconds. Now let's go to bed."

Ukridge shook his head.

"You've got it wrong, old horse. Nothing like that at all. You'd better let me tell the whole thing from the beginning."

THE first thing I did after that dinner (said Ukridge) was to go and call at Onslow Square. As a matter of fact, I called about three times in the first week; and it seemed to me that everything was going like a breeze. You know what I'm like when I'm staying with my Aunt Julia, Corky. Dapper is the word. Debonair. Perfectly groomed. Mind you, I don't say I enjoy dressing the way she makes me dress when I'm with her, but there's no getting away from it that it gives me an air. Seeing me strolling along the street with the gloves, the cane, the spats, the shoes, and the old top-hat, you might wonder if I was a marquess or a duke, but you would be pretty sure I was one of the two.

These things count with a girl. They count still more with her mother. By the end of the second week you wouldn't be far wrong in saying that I was the popular pet at Onslow Square. And then, rolling in one afternoon for a dish of tea, I was shocked to perceive nestling in my favourite chair, with all the appearance of a cove who is absolutely at home, another bloke. Mabel's mother was fussing over him as if he were the long-lost son. Mabel seemed to like him a good deal. And the nastiest shock of all came when I discovered that the fellow was a baronet.

Now, you know as well as I do, Corky, that for the ordinary workaday bloke Barts are tough birds to go up against. There is something about Barts that appeals to the most soulful girl. And as for the average mother, she eats them alive. Even an elderly Bart with two chins and a bald head is bad enough, and this was a young and juicy specimen. He had a clean-cut, slightly pimply, patrician face; and, what was worse, he was in the Coldstream Guards. And you will bear me out, Corky, when I say that, while an ordinary civilian Bart is bad enough, a Bart who is also a Guardee is a rival the stoutest-hearted cove might well shudder at.

And when you consider that practically all I had to put up against this serious menace was honest worth and a happy disposition, you will understand why the brow was a good deal wrinkled as I sat sipping my tea and listening to the rest of the company talking about people I'd never heard of and entertainments where I hadn't been among those we also noticed.

After awhile the conversation turned to Ascot.

"Are you going to Ascot, Mr. Ukridge?" said Mabel's mother, apparently feeling that it was time to include me in the chit-chat.

"Wouldn't miss it for worlds," I said.

Though, as a matter of fact, until that moment I had rather intended to give it the go-by. Fond as I am of the sport of kings, to my mind a race-meeting where you've got to go in a morning-coat and a top-hat—with the thermometer probably in the nineties—lacks fascination. I'm all for being the young duke when occasion requires, but races and toppers don't seem to me to go together.

"That's splendid," said Mabel, and I'm bound to say these kind words cheered me up a good deal. "We shall meet there."

"Sir Aubrey," said Mabel's mother, "has invited us to his house-party."

"Taken a place for the week down there," explained the Bart.

"Ah!" I said. And, mark you, that

was about all there was to say. For the sickening realization that this Guardee Bart, in addition to being a Bart and a Guardee, also possessed enough cash to take country-houses for Ascot Week in that careless, off-hand manner seemed to go all over me like nettlerash. I was rattled, Corky. Your old friend was rattled. I did some pretty tense thinking on my way back to Wimbledon.

WHEN I got there, I found my aunt in the drawing-room. And suddenly something in her attitude seemed to smite me like a blow. I don't know if you have ever had that rummy feeling which seems to whisper in your ear that Hell's foundations are about to quiver, but I got it the moment I caught sight of her. She was sitting bolt upright in a chair, and as I came in she looked at me. You know her, Corky, and you know just how she shoots her eyes at you without turning her head, as if she were a basilisk with a stiff neck. Well, that's how she looked at me now.

"Good evening," she said.

"Good evening," I said.

"So you've come in," she said.

"Yes," I said.

"Well, then, you can go straight out again," she said.

"Eh?" I said.

"And never come back," she said.

I goggled at her. Mark you, I had been heaved out of the old home by my Aunt Julia many a time before, so it wasn't as if I wasn't used to it; but I had never got the boot quite so suddenly before and so completely out of a blue sky. Usually, when Aunt Julia bungs me out on my ear, it is possible to see it coming days ahead.

"I might have guessed that something like this would happen," she said.

And then all things were made plain. She had found out about the clock. And it shows what love can do to a fellow, Corky, when I tell you that I had clean forgotten all about it.

You know the position of affairs when I go to live with my Aunt Julia. She feeds me and buys me clothes, but for some reason best known to her own distorted mind it is impossible to induce her to part with a little ready cash. The consequence was that, falling in love with Mabel as I had done and needing a quid or two for current expenses, I had had to rely on my native ingenuity and resource. It was absolutely imperative that I should give the girl a few flowers and chocolates from time to time, and this runs into money. So, seeing a rather juicy clock doing nothing on the mantelpiece of the spare bedroom, I had sneaked it off under my coat and put it up the spout at the local pawnbroker's. And now, apparently, in some devious and underhand manner she had discovered this.

Well, it was no good arguing. When my Aunt Julia is standing over you with her sleeves rolled up preparatory to getting a grip on the scruff of your neck and the seat of your trousers, it has always been my experience that words are useless. The only thing to do is to drift away and trust to Time, the great healer. Some forty minutes later, therefore, a solitary figure might have been observed legging it to the station with a suit-case. I was out in the great world once more.

However, you know me, Corky. The Old Campaigner. It takes more than a knock like that to crush your old friend. I took a bed-sitting-room in Arundel Street and sat down to envisage the situation.

Undeniably things had taken a nasty twist, and many a man lacking my vision and enterprise might have turned his face to the wall and said, "This is the end!" But I am made of sterner stuff. It seemed to me that all was not yet over. I had packed the morning coat, the waistcoat, the trousers, the shoes, the spats, and the gloves, and had gone away wearing the old top-hat; so, from a purely ornamental point of view, I was in precisely the position I had been before. That is to say, I could still continue to call at Onslow Square; and, what is more, if I could touch George Tupper for a fiver—which I intended to do without delay—I should have the funds to go to Ascot.

The sun, it appeared to me, therefore, was still shining. How true it is, Corky, that, no matter how the tempests lower, there is always sunshine somewhere! How true it is—— Oh, all right, I was only mentioning it.

Well, George Tupper, splendid fellow, parted without a murmur. Well, no, not —to be absolutely accurate—without a murmur. Still, he parted. And the position of affairs was now as follows. Cash in hand, five pounds. Price of admission to grand stand and paddock at Ascot for first day of meeting, two pounds. Time to elapse before Ascot, ten days. Net result—three quid in my kick to keep me going till then and pay my fare down and buy flowers and so on. It all looked very rosy.

But note, Corky, how Fate plays with us. Two days before Ascot, as I was coming back from having tea at Onslow Square—not a little preoccupied, for the Bart had been very strong on the wing that afternoon —there happened what seemed at first sight an irremediable disaster.

The weather, which had been fair and warm until that evening, had suddenly broken, and a rather nippy wind had sprung

Rolling in one afternoon for a dish of tea, I was shocked to see another bloke in my favourite chair.

up from the east. Now, if I had not been so tensely occupied with my thoughts, brooding on the Bart, I should of course have exercised reasonable precautions ; but, as it was, I turned the corner into the Fulham Road in what you might call a brown study ; and the first thing I knew my top-hat had been whisked off my head and was tooling along briskly in the direction of Putney.

Well, you know what the Fulham Road's like. A top-hat has about as much chance in it as a rabbit at a dog-show. I dashed after the thing with all possible speed, but what was the use ? A taxi-cab knocked it sideways towards a bus ; and the bus, curse it, did the rest. By the time the traffic had cleared a bit, I caught sight of the ruins and turned away with a silent groan. The thing wasn't worth picking up.

So there I was, dished.

Or, rather, what the casual observer who didn't know my enterprise and resource would have called dished. For a man like me, Corky, may be down, but he is never out. So swift were my mental processes that the time that elapsed between the sight of that ruined hat and my decision to pop round to the Foreign Office and touch George Tupper for another fiver was not more than fifty seconds. It is in the crises of life that brains really tell.

You can't accumulate if you don't speculate. So, though funds were running a bit low by this time, I invested a couple of bob in a cab. It was better to be two shillings out than to risk getting to the Foreign Office and finding that Tuppy had left.

WELL, late though it was, he was still there. That's one of the things I like about George Tupper, one of the reasons why I always maintain that he will rise to impressive heights in his country's service—he does not shirk ; he is not a clock-watcher. Many Civil Servants are apt to call it a day at five o'clock, but not George Tupper. That is why one of these days, Corky, when you are still struggling along turning out articles for *Interesting Bits* and writing footling short stories about girls who want to be loved for themselves alone, Tuppy will be Sir George Tupper, K.C.M.G., and a devil of a fellow among the Chancelleries.

I found him up to his eyes in official-looking papers, and I came to the point with all speed. I knew that he was probably busy declaring war on Montenegro or somewhere and wouldn't want a lot of idle chatter.

" Tuppy, old horse," I said, " it is imperative that I have a fiver immediately."

" A what ? " said Tuppy.

" A tenner," I said.

It was at this point that I was horrified to observe in the man's eye that rather cold, forbidding look which you sometimes see in blokes' eyes on these occasions.

" I lent you five pounds only a week ago," he said.

" And may Heaven reward you, old horse," I replied, courteously.

" What do you want any more for ? "

I was just about to tell him the whole circumstances when it was as if a voice whispered to me, " Don't do it ! " Something told me that Tuppy was in a nasty frame of mind and was going to turn me down—yes, me, an old schoolfellow, who had known him since he was in Eton collars. And at the same time I suddenly perceived, lying on a chair by the door, Tuppy's topper. For Tuppy is not one of those Civil Servants who lounge into Whitehall in flannels and a straw hat. He is a correct dresser, and I honour him for it.

" What on earth," said Tuppy, " do you need money for ? "

" Personal expenses, laddie," I replied. " The cost of living is very high these days."

" What you want," said Tuppy, " is work."

" What I want," I reminded him—if old Tuppy has a fault, it is that he will not stick to the point—" is a fiver."

He shook his head in a way I did not like to see.

" It's very bad for you, all this messing about on borrowed money. It's not that I grudge it to you," said Tuppy ; and I knew, when I heard him talk in that pompous, Foreign Official way, that something had gone wrong that day in the country's service. Probably the draft treaty with Switzerland had been pinched by a foreign adventuress. That sort of thing is happening all the time in the Foreign Office. Mysterious veiled women blow in on old Tuppy and engage him in conversation, and when he turns round he finds the long blue envelope with the important papers in it gone.

" It's not that I grudge you the money," said Tuppy, " but you really ought to be in some regular job. I must think," said Tuppy, " I must think. I must have a look round."

" And meanwhile," I said, " the fiver ? "

" No. I'm not going to give it to you."

" Only five pounds," I urged. " Five little pounds, Tuppy, old horse."

" No."

" You can chalk it up in the books to Office Expenses and throw the burden on the taxpayer."

" No."

" Will nothing move you ? "

" No. And I'm awfully sorry, old man,

A taxi-cab knocked the hat sideways towards a bus; and the bus did the rest. I caught sight of the ruins and turned away with a silent groan.

but I must ask you to clear out now. I'm terribly busy."

"Oh, right-ho," I said.

He burrowed down into the documents again; and I moved to the door, scooped up the top-hat from the chair, and passed out.

NEXT morning, when I was having a bit of breakfast, in rolled old Tuppy.

"I say," said Tuppy.

"Say on, laddie."

"You know when you came to see me yesterday?"

"Yes. You've come to tell me you've changed your mind about that fiver?"

"No, I haven't come to tell you I've changed my mind about that fiver. I was going to say that, when I started to leave the office, I found my top-hat had gone."

"Too bad," I said.

Tuppy gave me a piercing glance.

"You didn't take it, I suppose?"

"Who, me? What would I want with a top-hat?"

"Well, it's very mysterious."

"I expect you'll find it was pinched by an international spy or something."

Tuppy brooded for some moments.

"It's all very odd," he said. "I've never had it happen to me before."

"One gets new experiences."

"Well, never mind about that. What I really came about was to tell you that I think I have got you a job."

"You don't mean that!"

"I met a man at the club last night who wants a secretary. It's more a matter with him of having somebody to keep his papers in order and all that sort of thing, so typing and shorthand are not essential. You can't do shorthand, I suppose?"

"I don't know. I've never tried."

"Well, you're to go and see him to-morrow morning at ten. His name's Bulstrode, and you'll find him at my club. It's a good chance, so for Heaven's sake don't be lounging in bed at ten."

"I won't. I'll be up and ready, with a heart for any fate."

"Well, mind you are."

"And I am deeply grateful, Tuppy, old horse, for these esteemed favours."

"That's all right," said Tuppy. He paused at the door. "It's a mystery about that hat."

"Insoluble, I should say. I shouldn't worry any more about it."

"One moment it was there, and the next it had gone."

"How like life!" I said. "Makes one think a bit, that sort of thing."

He pushed off, and I was just finishing my breakfast when Mrs. Beale, my landlady, came in with a letter.

It was from Mabel, reminding me to be sure to come to Ascot. I read it three times while I was consuming a fried egg; and I am not ashamed to say, Corky, that tears filled my eyes. To think of her caring so much that she should send special letters urging me to be there made me tremble like a leaf. It looked to me as though the Bart's number was up. Yes, at that moment, Corky, I felt positively sorry for the Bart, who was in his way quite a good chap, though pimply.

That night I made my final preparations. I counted the cash in hand. I had just enough to pay my fare to Ascot and back, my entrance fee to the grand stand and paddock, with a matter of fifteen bob over for lunch and general expenses and a thoughtful ten bob to do a bit of betting with. Financially, I was on velvet.

Nor was there much wrong with the costume department. I dug out the trousers, the morning coat, the waistcoat, the shoes and the spats, and I tried on Tuppy's topper again. And for the twentieth time I wished that old Tuppy, a man of sterling qualities in every other respect, had had a slightly bigger head. It's a curious thing about old George Tupper. There's a man who you might say is practically directing the destinies of a great nation—at any rate, he's in the Foreign Office and extremely well thought of by the Nibs—and yet his size in hats is a small seven. I don't know if you've ever noticed that Tuppy's head goes up to a sort of point. Mine, on the other hand, is shaped more like a mango-wurtzel, and this made the whole thing rather complex and unpleasant.

As I stood looking in the glass, giving myself a final inspection, I couldn't help feeling what a difference a hat makes to a man. Bare-headed, I was perfect in every detail; but with a hat on I looked a good deal like a bloke about to go on and do a comic song at one of the halls. Still, there it was, and it was no good worrying about it. I put the trousers under the mattress, to ensure an adequate crease; and I rang the bell for Mrs. Beale and gave her the coat to press with a hot iron. I also gave her the hat and instructed her to rub stout on it. This, as you doubtless know, gives a topper the deuce of a gloss; and when a fellow is up against a Bart, he can't afford to neglect the smallest detail.

And so to bed.

I DIDN'T sleep very well. At about one in the morning it started to rain in buckets, and the thought suddenly struck me: what the deuce was I going to do if it rained during the day? To buy an umbrella would simply dislocate the Budget beyond repair. The consequence was that I tossed pretty restlessly on my pillow.

But all was well. When I woke at eight o'clock the sun was pouring into the room, and the last snag seemed to have been removed from my path. I had breakfast, and then I dug the trouserings out from under the mattress, slipped into them, put on the shoes, buckled the spats, and rang the bell for Mrs. Beale. I was feeling debonair to a degree. The crease in the trousers was perfect.

"Oh, Mrs. Beale," I said. "The coat and the hat, please. What a lovely morning!"

Now, this Beale woman, I must tell you, was a slightly sinister sort of female, with eyes that reminded me a good deal of my Aunt Julia's. And I was now somewhat rattled to perceive that she was looking at me in a rather meaning kind of manner. I also perceived that she held in her hand a paper or document. And there shot through me, Corky, a nameless fear.

It's a kind of instinct, I suppose. A man who has been up against it as frequently as I have comes to shudder automatically

when he sees a landlady holding a sheet of paper and looking at him in a meaning manner.

A moment later it was plain that my sixth sense had not deceived me.

"I've brought your little account, Mr. Ukridge," said this fearful female.

"Right!" I said, heartily. "Just shove it on the table, will you? And bring the coat and hat."

She looked more like my Aunt Julia than ever.

"I must ask you for the money now," she said. "Being a week overdue."

All this was taking the sunshine out of the morning, but I remained debonair.

"Yes, yes," I said. "I quite understand. We'll have a good long talk about that later. The hat and coat, please, Mrs. Beale."

"I must ask you——" she was beginning again, but I checked her with one of my looks. If there's one thing I bar in this world, Corky, it's sordidness.

"Yes, yes," I said, testily. "Some other time. I want the hat and coat, please."

At this moment, by the greatest bad luck, her vampire gaze fell on the mantelpiece. You know how it is when you are dressing with unusual care—you fill your pockets last thing. And I had most unfortunately placed my little capital on the mantelpiece. Too late I saw that she had spotted it. Take the advice of a man who has seen something of life, Corky, and never leave your money lying about. It's bound to start a disagreeable train of thought in the mind of anyone who sees it.

"You've got the money there," said Mrs. Beale.

I leaped for the mantelpiece and trousered the cash.

"No, no," I said, hastily. "You can't have that. I need that."

"Ho?" she said. "So do I."

"Now listen, Mrs. Beale," I said. "You know as well as I do——"

"I know as well as you do that you owe me two pounds three and sixpence ha'penny."

"And in God's good time," I said, "you shall have it. But just for the moment you must be patient. Why, dash it, Mrs. Beale," I said, warmly, "you know as well as I do that in all financial transactions a certain amount of credit is an understood thing. Credit is the life-blood of commerce. Without credit-commerce has no elasticity. So bring the hat and coat, and later on we will thresh this matter out thoroughly."

And then this woman showed a baseness of soul, a horrible low cunning, which, I like to think, is rarely seen in the female sex.

"I'll either have the money," she said, "or I'll keep the coat and hat." And words cannot express, Corky, the hideous malignity in her voice. "They ought to fetch a bit."

I stared at her, appalled.

"But I can't go to Ascot without a top-hat."

"Then you'd better not go to Ascot."

"Be reasonable!" I begged. "Reflect!"

It was no good. She stood firm on her demand for two pounds three and sixpence ha'penny, and nothing that I could say would shift her. I offered her double the sum at some future date, but no business was done. The curse of landladies as a class, Corky, and the reason why they never rise to ease and opulence, is that they have no vision. They do not understand high finance. They lack the big, broad, flexible outlook which wins to wealth. The deadlock continued, and finally she went off, leaving me dished once more.

IT is only when you are in a situation like that, Corky, that you really begin to be able to appreciate the true hollowness of the world. It is only then that the absolute silliness and futility of human institutions comes home to you. This Ascot business, for instance. Why, in the name of Heaven, if you are going to hold a race-meeting, should you make a foolish regulation about the sort of costume people must wear if they want to attend it? Why should it be necessary to wear a top-hat at Ascot, when you can go to all the other races in anything you like?

Here was I, perfectly equipped for Hurst Park, Sandown, Gatwick, Ally Pally, Lingfield, or any other meeting you care to name; and, simply because a ghoul of a landlady had pinched my topper, I was utterly debarred from going to Ascot, though the price of admission was bulging in my pocket. It's just that sort of thing that makes a fellow chafe at our modern civilization and wonder if, after all, Man can be Nature's last word.

Such, Corky, were my meditations as I stood at the window and gazed bleakly out at the sunshine. And then, suddenly, as I gazed, I observed a bloke approaching up the street.

I EYED him with interest. He was an elderly, prosperous bloke with a yellowish face and a white moustache, and he was looking at the numbers on the doors, as if he were trying to spot a destination. And at this moment he halted outside the front door of my house, squinted up at the number, and then trotted up the steps and rang the bell. And I realized at once that this must be Tuppy's secretary man, the fellow I was due to go and see at the club in

another half-hour. For a moment it seemed odd that he should have come to call on me instead of waiting for me to call on him; and then I reflected that this was just the sort of thing that the energetic, world's-worker type of man that Tuppy chummed up with at his club would be likely to do. Time is money with these coves, and no doubt he had remembered some other appointment which he couldn't make if he waited at his club till ten.

Anyway, here he was, and I peered down at him with a beating heart. For what sent a thrill through me, Corky, was the fact that he was much about my build and was brightly clad in correct morning costume, with top-hat complete. And though it was hard to tell exactly at such a distance and elevation, the thought flashed across me like an inspiration from above that that top-hat would fit me a dashed sight better than Tuppy's had done.

In another minute there was a knock on the door, and he came in.

Seeing him at close range, I perceived that I had not misjudged this man. He was shortish, but his shoulders were just about the same size as mine, and his head was large and round. If ever, in a word, a bloke might have been designed by Providence to wear a coat and hat that would fit me, this bloke was that bloke. I gazed at him with a gleaming eye.

"Mr. Ukridge?"

"Yes," I said. "Come in. Awfully good of you to call."

"Not at all."

AND now, Corky, as you will no doubt have divined, I was, so to speak, at the cross-roads. The finger-post of Prudence pointed one way, that of Love another. Prudence whispered to me to conciliate this bloke, to speak him fair, to comport myself towards him as towards one who held my destinies in his hand and who could, if well disposed, give me a job which would keep the wolf from the door while I was looking round for something bigger and more attuned to my vision and abilities.

Love, on the other hand, was shouting to me to pinch his coat and hat and leg it for the open spaces.

It was the deuce of a dilemma.

"I have called——" began the bloke.

I made up my mind. Love got the decision.

"I say," I said, "I think you've got something on the back of your coat."

"Eh?" said the bloke, trying to squint round and look between his shoulder-blades—silly ass.

"It's a squashed tomato or something."

"A squashed tomato?"

"Or something."

"How would I get a squashed tomato on my coat?"

"Ah!" I said, giving him to understand with a wave of the hand that these were deep matters.

"Very curious," said the bloke.

"Very," I said. "Slip off your coat and let's have a look at it."

He slid out of the coat, and I was on it like a knife. You have to move quick on these occasions, and I moved quick. I had the coat out of his hand and the top-hat off the table where he had put it, and was out of the door and dashing down the stairs before he could utter a yip.

I put on the coat, and it fitted like a glove. I slapped the top-hat on to my head, and it might have been made for me. And then I went out into the sunshine, as natty a specimen as ever paced down Piccadilly.

I was passing down the front steps when I heard a sort of bellow from above. There was the bloke, protruding from the window; and, strong man though I am, Corky, I admit that for an instant I quailed at the sight of the hideous fury that distorted his countenance.

"Come back!" shouted the bloke.

Well, it wasn't a time for standing and making explanations and generally exchanging idle chatter. When a man is leaning out of window in his shirt-sleeves, making the amount of noise that this cove was making, it doesn't take long for a crowd to gather. And my experience has been that, when a crowd gathers, it isn't much longer before some infernal, officious policeman rolls round as well. Nothing was farther from my wishes than to have this little purely private affair between the bloke and myself sifted by a policeman in front of a large crowd.

So I didn't linger. I waved my hand as much as to say that all would come right in the future, and then I nipped at a fairly high rate of speed round the corner and hailed a taxi. It had been no part of my plans to incur the expense of a taxi, I having earmarked twopence for a ride on the Tube to Waterloo; but there are times when economy is false prudence.

Once in the cab, whizzing along and putting more distance between the bloke and myself with every revolution of the wheels, I perked up amazingly. I had been, I confess, a trifle apprehensive until now; but from this moment everything seemed splendid. I forgot to mention it before, but this final top-hat which now nestled so snugly on the brow was a grey top-hat; and, if there is one thing that really lends a zip and a sort of devilish fascination to a fellow's appearance, it is one of those grey

I had the coat and the top-hat and was out of the door before he could utter **a yip.**

toppers. As I looked at myself in the glass and then gazed out of window at the gay sunshine, it seemed to me that God was in his Heaven and all was right with the world.

The general excellence of things continued. I had a pleasant journey; and when I got to Ascot I planked my ten bob on a horse I had heard some fellows talking about in the train, and, by Jove, it ambled home at a crisp ten to one. So there I was, five quid ahead of the game almost, you might say, before I had got there. It was with an uplifted heart, Corky, that I strolled off to the paddock to have a look at the multitude and try to find Mabel. And I had hardly emerged from that tunnel thing that you have to walk through to get from the stand to the paddock when I ran into old Tuppy.

My first feeling on observing the dear old chap was one of relief that I wasn't wearing his hat. Old Tuppy is one of the best, but little things are apt to upset him, and I was in no mood for a painful scene. I passed the time of day genially.

"Ah, Tuppy!" I said.

George Tupper is a man with a heart of gold, but he is deficient in tact.

"How the deuce did you get here?" he asked.

"In the ordinary way, laddie," I said.

"I mean, what are you doing here, dressed up to the nines like this?"

"Naturally," I replied, with a touch of stiffness, "when I come to Ascot, I wear the accepted morning costume of the well-dressed Englishman."

"You look as if you had come into a fortune."

"Yes?" I said, rather wishing he would change the subject. In spite of what you might call the perfect *alibi* of the grey topper, I did not want to discuss hats and clothes with Tuppy so soon after his recent bereavement. I could see that the hat he had on was a brand-new one and must have set him back at least a couple of quid.

"I suppose you've gone back to your aunt?" said Tuppy, jumping at a plausible solution. "Well, I'm awfully glad, old man, because I'm afraid that secretary job is off. I was going to write to you to-night."

"Off?" I said. Having had the advantage of seeing the bloke's face as he hung out of window at the moment of our parting, I knew it was off; but I couldn't see how Tuppy could know.

"He rang me up last night, to tell me that he was afraid you wouldn't do, as he had thought it over and decided that he must have a secretary who knew shorthand."

"Oh?" I said. "Oh, did he? Then I'm dashed glad," I said, warmly, "that I pinched his hat. It will be a sharp lesson to him not to raise people's hopes and shilly-shally in this manner."

"Pinched his hat? What do you mean?"

I perceived that there was need for caution. Tuppy was looking at me in an odd manner, and I could see that the turn the conversation had taken was once more wakening in him suspicions which he ought to have known better than to entertain of an old school friend.

"It was like this, Tuppy," I said. "When you came to me and told me about that international spy sneaking your hat from the Foreign Office, it gave me an idea. I had been wanting to come to Ascot, but I had no topper. Of course, if I had pinched yours, as you imagined for a moment I had done, I should have had one; but, not having pinched yours, of course I hadn't one. So when your friend Bulstrode called on me this morning I collared his. And now that you have revealed to me what a fickle, changeable character he is, I'm very glad I did."

Tuppy gaped slightly.

"Bulstrode called on you this morning, did you say?"

"This morning at about half-past nine."

"He couldn't have done."

"Then how do you account for my having

his hat? Pull yourself together, Tuppy, old horse."

"The man who came to see you couldn't have been Bulstrode."

"Why not?"

"He left for Paris last night."

"What!"

"He 'phoned me from the station just before his train started. He had had to change his plans."

"Then who was the bloke?" I said. The thing seemed to me to have the makings of one of those great historic mysteries you read about. I saw no reason why posterity should not discuss for ever the problem of the bloke in the grey topper as keenly as they do the man in the iron mask.

"The facts," I said, "are precisely as I

have stated. At nine-thirty this morning a bird, gaily apparelled in morning-coat, sponge-bag trousers, and grey top-hat, presented himself at my rooms and——"

At this moment a voice spoke behind me.

I stared at the man. He appeared to me to be gibbering.

"Oh, hullo!"

I turned, and observed the Bart.

"Hullo!" I said.

I introduced Tuppy. The Bart nodded courteously.

"I say," said the Bart. "Where's the old man?"

"What old man?"

"Mabel's father. Didn't he catch you?"

I stared at the man. He appeared to me to be gibbering. And a gibbering Bart is a nasty thing to have hanging about you before you have strengthened yourself with a bit of lunch.

"Mabel's father's in Singapore," I said.

"No, he isn't," said the Bart. "He got home yesterday, and Mabel sent him round to your place to pick you up and bring you down here in the car. Had you left before he arrived?"

Well, that's where the story ends, Corky. From the moment that pimply Baronet uttered those words, you might say that I faded out of the picture. I never went near Onslow Square again. Nobody can say that I lack nerve, but I hadn't nerve enough to creep into the family circle and resume acquaintance with that fearsome bloke. There are some men, no doubt, with whom I might have been able to pass the whole thing off with a light laugh, but that glimpse I had had of him as he bellowed out of the window told me that he was not one of them. I faded away, Corky, old horse, just faded away. And about a couple of months later I read in the paper that Mabel had married the Bart.

UKRIDGE sighed another sigh and heaved himself up from the sofa. Outside the world was blue-grey with the growing dawn, and even the later birds were busy among the worms.

"You might make a story out of that, Corky," said Ukridge.

"I might," I said.

"All profits to be shared on a strict fifty-fifty basis, of course."

"Of course."

Ukridge brooded.

"Though it really wants a bigger man to do it justice and tell it properly, bringing out all the fine shades of the tragedy. It wants somebody like Thomas Hardy or Kipling, or somebody."

"Better let me have a shot at it."

"All right," said Ukridge. "And, as regards a title, I should call it 'His Lost Romance,' or something like that. Or would you suggest simply something terse and telling, like 'Fate' or 'Destiny'?"

"I'll think of a title," I said.

ONE OF THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD—DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

# "The Cell of Pure Dreams" of D'ANNUNZIO, THE GREAT ITALIAN POET AND PATRIOT.

## THE STRANGE STORY OF HIS VISION AND HIS VOW

## THE CREATION OF HIS WONDER-ROOM

## A LEPER'S CELL, AN ART-GALLERY, AND A DEATH-CHAMBER

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO, Italy's famous poet, dramatist, novelist, soldier, and aviator, is now carrying out, in the spirit if not the actual letter, a remarkable vow solemnly registered by him many years ago during a visit to one of his country's oldest and most celebrated convents. This vow, as strange a one as it is possible to conceive being made by one of the most renowned devotees of his time to the luxuries and the decorative things of life, was nothing less than to consider himself as a lowly leper. To occupy a leper's cell. To sleep on a leper's bed.

As a partial fulfilment of his vow, inspired by a remarkable vision which the poet declares he beheld, Signor D'Annunzio recently has created what must be one of the most extraordinary rooms in the world. This is the astonishing, and as yet all but undescribed, apartment in the formerly modest villa at Gardone, transformed by D'Annunzio into a palace, which he calls his "Cell of Pure Dreams," and which he has now decided shall be his death chamber.

Representing the expenditure of a fortune, designed by a distinguished Italian architect, and marvellously embellished by one of Italy's most brilliant artists of the younger generation, this apartment was originally designed by D'Annunzio as a reproduction of the type of cells once tenanted by the wretched victims of leprosy. The surprising story of its inception is in detail as follows.

Some twenty or perhaps thirty years ago, while wandering about the old city of Ferraro, D'Annunzio visited the dilapidated Convent of the Consoling Mother, part of which had been a lepers' hospital. And while within its crumbling walls, he asserts, suddenly came the vision that he afterwards recorded in "Le Faville del Maglio," which was his tribute to the memory of Eleonora Duse.

### HOLY WOMEN BRING GIFTS.

In this vision he saw himself as a monk to whom five holy women were bringing symbols of renunciation of the world. One of these ministering visitors, the Sibyl of Flanders, gave him "sandals and a camel's-hair cloak." Another, Elizabeth of Hungary, presented him with "a cord for the waist, a wooden bowl, a little bed, with all its belongings." The third, Odile of Alsace, bestowed upon him "a little coffer with a key and a new table-cloth." The fourth of the poet's saintly visitants, Judith of Polonia, gave him "a tin pot and an iron tripod to

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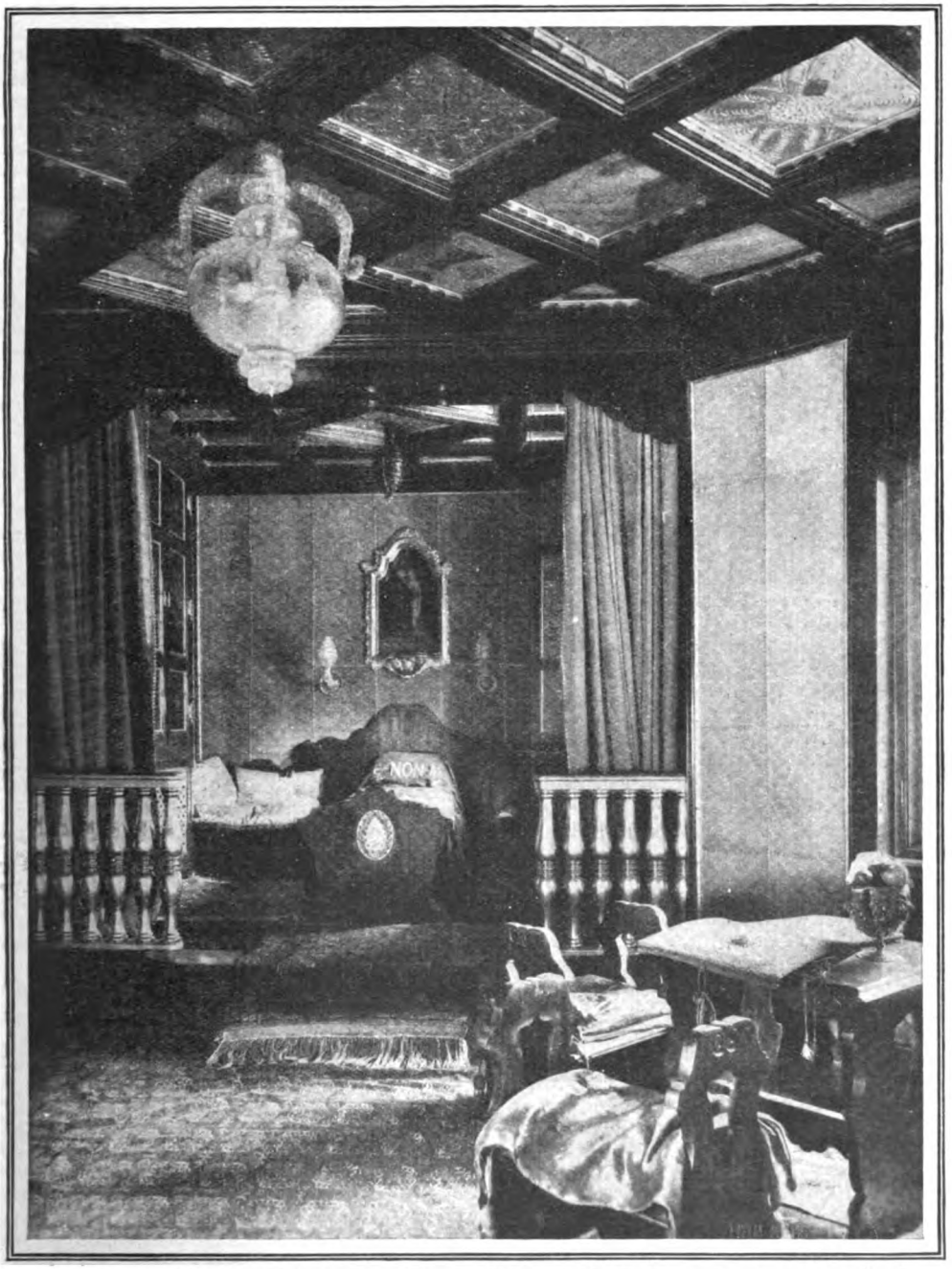
hold it, with soup-bowls of ash, cherry, and other woods"; while the gifts of the fifth, Catherine of Siena, were "a book, a flower, and an oil-lamp."

These gifts, according to D'Annunzio, were these holy women's respective cures for the sickness of his brain, symbolized by the leprosy. And forthwith, under the guidance of the aged Umbrian monk who was the custodian of the convent, the poet took, as



This view of "The Cell of Pure Dreams" shows the alcove with its narrow bed, above which hangs the portrait of D'Annunzio as a leper.

has been related, a solemn vow to consider himself a cloistered leper—a "misello," as he called his humble guide. When, however, years later, the time came to carry out this vow, the entire vision and the symbolical representation of all that was best loved by D'Annunzio exerted their claims to be expressed in the decoration of his "cell."

The home of Italy's great poetic genius, wherever it might be, has always been, to a certain extent, a realization in artistic form of his most intimate thoughts. But none of D'Annunzio's many residences has ever expressed like his marvellous retreat at Gardone—of which the "Cell of Pure Dreams" is the gem—both his love of country and his highly cultivated personal tastes.

Easily the most colourful literary personality of his time, the author of "Francesca di Rimini" is almost equally renowned as writer, soldier, sportsman, and exquisite. Millions the world over who may never have read a word he has written have been awed by descriptions of his dazzling wardrobe—stated in pre-war days to have included as many as one hundred and fifty cravats, seventy-two shirts, and twelve dozen pairs of gloves, not to mention such strange sartorial items as trousers of mauve, waistcoats of pale-rose tint, and umbrellas and sunshades of violet and green!

Essentially a poet, but first known to world fame as the author of those arresting novels, "The Virgin of the Rocks" and "The Triumph of Death," D'Annunzio later devoted himself to the drama and gained even greater renown with his tragedies, "La Gioconda," "The Dead City," and the rest, in which Eleonora Duse scored the greatest triumphs of her career.

Pencil drawing of D'Annunzio made by Cadorin as a study for "The Leper," reproduced on the opposite page.

### WAR TRANSFORMS THE POET.

A world accustomed to amiable eccentricities from D'Annunzio, such as the elaborate "funeral" he accorded a favourite goldfish, beheld him, during the war, in the more admirable *rôles* of ardent patriot, intrepid aviator, and fearless soldier. Unquestionably his impassioned denunciations of the Central Powers were largely responsible for Italy's decision to fight on the side of the Allies. His later exploits in the air, notably a daring flight over Vienna, must be still fresh in the memory of all readers.

And finally, after the conclusion of peace, came the culminating episode of D'Annunzio's whole career. This was his dramatic seizure and occupation of Fiume, which gave to Italy (instead of to Jugo-Slavia, as had been the intention of international diplomatists) the ownership of that famous seaport on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. And which resulted, among other things, in the conferment upon D'Annunzio by Mussolini of the title of Prince of Montenevoso!

And so we come to the story of how this soldier-poet's new and splendid home, which he has named "The Victory," was founded by D'Annunzio shortly after his evacuation of Fiume. At Gardone, on the tranquil south-west shore of Lago di Garda, his country's hero, with a few of his "Legionari," retired to private life in the modest villa of "Cargnacco," which had been confiscated from its German proprietor when Italy entered the war.

Having purchased this villa from the Italian Government, D'Annunzio began at once to embellish it and transform it into a shrine to the Heroes of the Victory. And as such he has presented it to the State, which, enacting a special law for the purpose, has declared "Il Vittoriale" a national monument.

And now Guido Cadorin, the gifted young Italian painter, has completed the latest and beyond doubt, artistically speaking, the finest touch to this, the most personal of all D'Annunzio's many dwelling-places in Italy. Namely, the superb room already mentioned—a realization in exquisite form of thoughts which the poet, holding close for many years, only published in "Le Faville del Maglio" as his tribute to Duse.

This apartment, first thought of as a

solitary bed-chamber, the artist-architect Maroni built out beyond the eastern wing of the villa, upon an especially erected arcade which encloses the quadrangular inner court that is formed by the old section and the recent additions. A square room, flooded by day with a calm light, it is poised upon its cloister foundation, with the garden all about it.

Guido Cadorin, the young Venetian artist whom D'Annunzio chose to realize, in form and colour, the "cell" of his imaginings, had been previously scarcely known to him personally. But Cadorin's paintings, especially two large woodcut "Stations of the Cross," had won the confidence of the poet, even before he had seen Cadorin's magnificent decorations of the Villa Papodopoli at Vittorio Veneto and of the Villa Zadra above the Piave at Vidor. To Cadorin D'Annunzio gave an absolutely free hand, and the painter, inspired by the poet, achieved a new work of art to the unbounded satisfaction of his distinguished patron.

Gabriele D'Annunzio as a leper kneeling before St. Francis of Assisi.
By Guido Cadorin.

**THE POET DEPICTED AS A LEPER.**

Upon entering the "Zambra del misello," to use another of D'Annunzio's many names for his new room, one's glance travels first to Cadorin's portrait of his patron as a leper kneeling before St. Francis. This arresting work, in its gilded frame, flanked by two of Cadorin's pure white Murano lamps, hangs upon the end wall of the alcove, above the narrow bed. It is seen and felt even before all harmonies created by the mouse-grey suède walls and curtains, the lustrous seal-brown lacquer woodwork, picked out in lines of gold, and all the unpainted panels relieved by the classic gold rose in the centre.

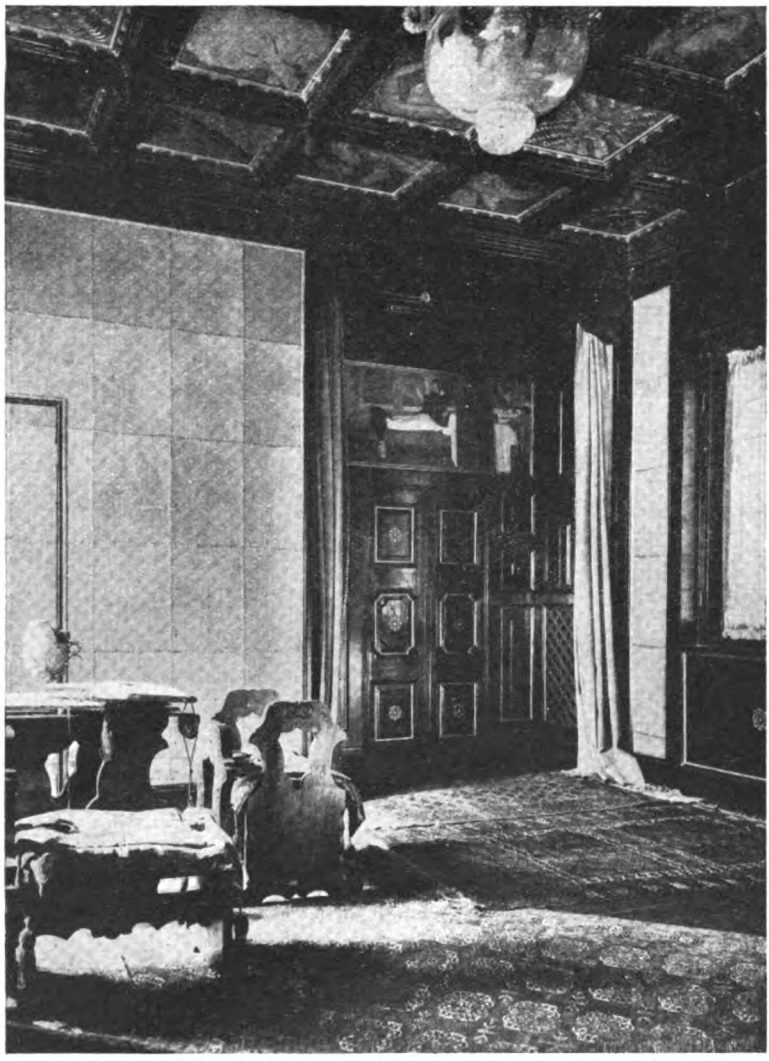
An excellent portrait of D'Annunzio at sixty-three, "The Leper" is veritably the "clou" of this marvellous room of mingled beauty and symbol. Like the other paintings in the apartment, it is upon wood in tempera with a vellatura of varnish in colours, the technique preferred by Cadorin for all his paintings. In the preparatory drawing (also reproduced here) may be seen something of the insight with which the painter interprets the poet. Only a mystic of the profound æsthetic culture of Cadorin could express in painting this "Lebbroso" the inspiration and theme of the "Cell of Pure Dreams."

The naked leper is kneeling before St. Francis of Assisi, but is passively resisting the embrace of that most severe but forgiving of disciplinarians. The face of the leper is averted toward the holy women represented upon the ceiling of the room, who are bringing him their cure for the sickness of his brain, symbolized by the leprosy, which prevents him from yielding to the embrace of the Faith.

These five calm and beneficent women of the vision of the Ferrara convent leper hospital are seen, beyond the brown and gold coffers of the ceiling, floating downward, out of a background of deep night-blue sky, like angels in vaporous garments of vibrant colours. Each ministering visitor bears something in her hands that symbolizes her

contribution to the modest requirements of a monk, signifying that the healing of the leper can come only through absolute surrender to the Order of the "Poverello d'Assisi."

This main ceiling is coffered at an angle to form the unpictured panels into a Cross, the top of which, with I.N.R.I., begins at the alcove, the other squares bearing the symbols of the Passion in high gold relief. From the centre hangs a large white Murano lamp of Cadorin's pure and simple curves. The globe encloses a four-branched candelabra sustaining powerful electric lights under which the subtle beauty of the entire apartment, and especially of these ceiling tone-paintings, is most impressive.



Another view of "The Cell of Pure Dreams," showing a portion of the ceiling with the paintings of the five holy women seen by D'Annunzio in his remarkable vision.

### THE SPLENDOURS OF THE "CELL."

On the floor of the "cell" a high-piled black velvet carpet is partly covered with subdued Buchara and other Persian rugs. The simple furniture, designed by Gian Carlo Maroni, architect of the transformed villa, is cut out of solid black walnut. The wall spaces are covered by oblong panels of rich grey suède, sewn together by hand with fine gilded leather thongs. The same leather hangs in the straight folds of the long, heavy curtains at the door at the entrance to the alcove. That is raised two steps above the floor of the room, and is guarded at either side by massive out-sets of well-turned balustrades gilded with double leaf of pure gold, highly burnished, the entire process of the old Venetian gilders having been followed.

The little bed, some two feet wide, cut from the solid walnut after Maroni's design, with a laurel wreath carved and gilded upon the footboard, is spread with a cover of dark brown suède in squares sewn together, and upon which, in the old Venetian manner of gilding leather, is a radiant "sunburst." Across the top of the cover, in gold lettering, is the favourite motto of D'Annunzio: "Dona e non isciema," which may be freely translated: "I have nothing but that which I have given away." It would not be easy

to find a motto more applicable to "Il Vittoriale."

The lateral walls of the alcove are partially filled by lacquered cabinets in the prevailing style of the woodwork, varied by figures in red representing the four archangels, including the neglected Hebrew Uriel, to whom D'Annunzio gives the name of Ariel, perhaps with some thought of Shakespeare and Shelley, for both of whom he has

cell" are all of Cadorin's decorated plate and glass.

"Let them," wrote D'Annunzio to the painter, "be similar to the pages of a luminous Book of Psalms, ornamented like the field of certain rich initials, the decorations of the five different panes corresponding to the psalmistic benedictions to be inscribed on the five panes respectively."

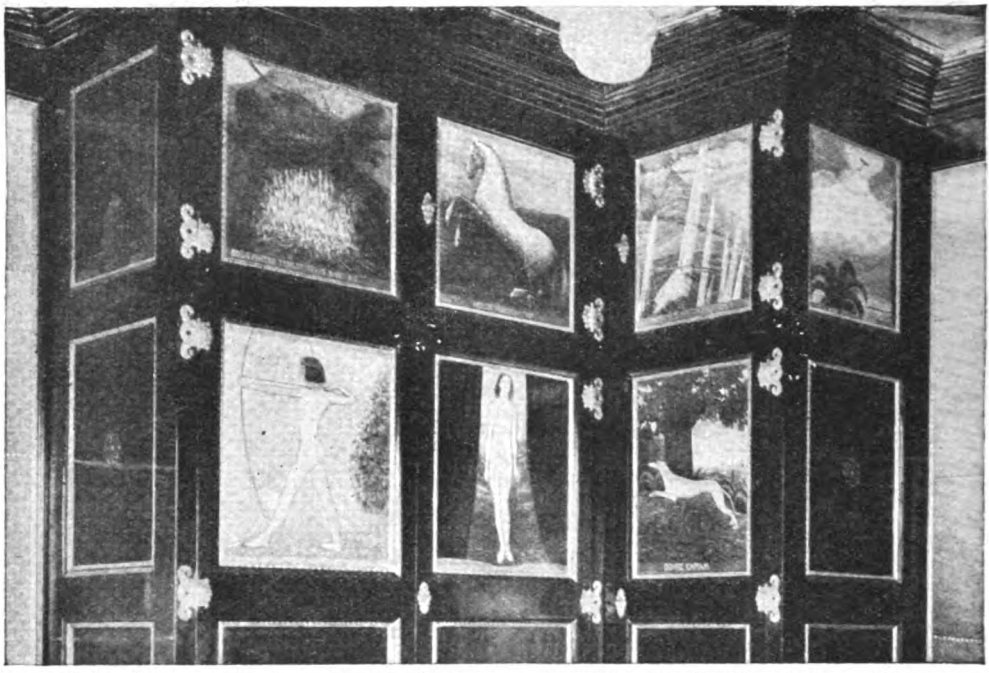
**These paintings of the five holy women of D'Annunzio's vision form part of the beautifully-decorated ceiling shown on the opposite page.**

a deep admiration. On the inner side of these small doors are symbolical designs of the Four Elements. One of the cabinets, turning upon hinges, reveals a window beside the bed, affording an abundance of light and air to the alcove.

The windows of this strangely luxurious

**"CONSTANT LOVES" OF D'ANNUNZIO.**

More positive in treatment than the mystic visions of the ceiling are the eight small panels of the cabinet which occupies the most noticeable corner of the main room. There, again, Cadorin has been able to put himself into such harmony with the mind



**Eight of the panels of a cabinet in the main room are decorated with paintings, rich in colour, of D'Annunzio's "constant loves."**

of the poet that he appears to have interpreted with the spontaneity of original thought the conceptions of D'Annunzio's "constant loves":—

"The beautiful nude woman, with the motto: *Semper non semper;*

"The rearing horse, with the motto: *Morsu praestantior;*

"The running greyhound, with the motto: *Donec capiam;*

"The aircraft flying high, with the motto: *Non sufficit orbis;*

"The brandished sword, with the motto: *Lucem sub nubila iactat;*

"The tenth muse 'Energia,' with the motto: (*O Musa di Ronchi!*) *Fert diem et horam;*

"Fire burning amidst wild beasts in flight, with the motto: *Solus fortes terret ignis non me;*

"An organ and another musical instrument, with the motto: *Nun quam dissomis.*"

**This enlargement of one of the panels shows Cadorin's beautiful work to better advantage.**

Each of these small temperas with the delicate vellatura is a jewel, substantial in drawing, rich in colour, pervaded by atmosphere, liberally interpreting the poet's human qualities, as the ceiling and the "cell" express his mysticism.

One more picture remains. Above the doors is an exceptionally fine painting of the Great Master in His divine humanity—Christ accepting the Magdalen's gift of the precious ointment upon His feet. This is the largest panel and the only scenic composition in the room. Longitudinal, it is of size and position to give to the painter his greatest freedom. Of the three sections of the picture, the two side portions—the feasters on the right, under artificial light, and the serving woman in shadow on the left—are low in general tone, full of unexalted human life, enveloped in the architectural night setting of a warm country, grey predominating, relieved by white.

Even this inadequate description should make it evident why his sumptuous "cell" is prized by D'Annunzio above any part

Two of the figures representing archangels which—

—decorate the panels at the side of the bed.

of his wonderful villa. Its cost has been enormous, and truly princely has been the poet's generosity to the artists entrusted with its furnishing and embellishment. Now that it is finished, and dedicated to a destiny unthought of at first, he carries the key in his own pocket, allowing no one to enter it without his knowledge, not even his most trusted servants.

### THE DRAMATIST SETS HIS LAST SCENE.

Nor will it be difficult to understand why D'Annunzio, face to face with the beauty of this realization of his "cell," saw the destiny of his conception change in a flash. "Impossible to subject this to the uses of a bedroom," he said. "Still my cell of pure dreams, it shall also be, when the time comes, my death chamber. Young Italians, coming here for a last look at me when I am dead, may learn something that will do them good."

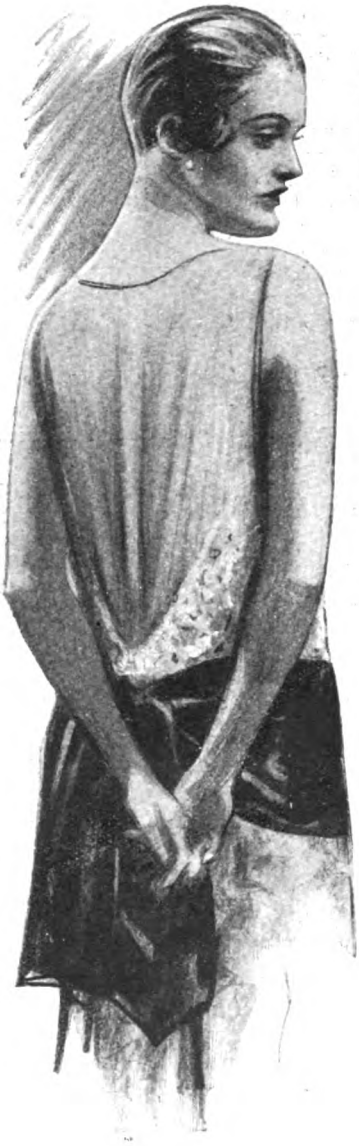
Such was the origin and natural development of the much-talked-of and little-understood mortuary chamber of D'Annunzio, especially little understood in some non-Latin parts of the globe. Yet it is hard to see what is unnatural in such a final dedication of this most beautiful room.

To say nothing of the many claims of D'Annunzio the patriot and powerful citizen to the national consideration, D'Annunzio the poet and novelist, who for almost half a century has seen his works sell by the hundreds of thousands, would indeed be a fool or a hypocrite to pretend that his countrymen would not make a shrine of his bier. The author of "The Triumph of Death" is neither, and in order that all matters relating to his end shall be arranged in keeping with his taste, he has, while hale and hearty in the third score of his years, seen to these affairs himself, not alone in testamentary directions, but in concrete fact.

With the aid of such art as Maroni's and Cadorin's, Italy's premier dramatist has set his last scene. How he regards himself in the drama is indicated by the nude leper kneeling before St. Francis, and looking, not at the beautiful things he has always loved, but toward the holy women who are bringing him the symbols of all worldly renunciation.

Cadorin's painting, "Christ and the Magdalen," which hangs above the entrance doors.

(See page 60.)



# The BOSSCACKLE TWINS

I.

WE meet the twins at Claridge's Hotel, where their mother, Mrs. Bosscackle, of Trentopolis, Missouri, had taken a *roi-en-exil suite* of rooms. She was contemplating buying a London house later on, and was seriously concerned at the moment over the evasion of paying double income and super tax if she settled for more than six months in England. Her London solicitors made it plain that evasion was impossible. She could, of course, sell out her large American interests, and reinvest her capital in gilt-edged British securities. But the children's fortune, under the terms of their late father's will, had to remain in the Mid-West, in the hands of American trustees. Any money allocated to them and sent over to England would be subject to tax. The twins—a boy and a girl—were exactly alike. They were just eighteen. Their likeness became confounding when Hermione shingled her pretty pate, which she did, without her august mother's consent, three days after arriving at Claridge's.

Mrs. Bosscackle happened to be remotely of kin to Lord Saltash of Saltire. Everybody in Trentopolis knew this and smiled compassionately when the lady changed the Bosscackle " home " into a stately Georgian mansion, engaged an English butler and a French governess. The late Hiram Bosscackle had called himself a hundred-per-cent. American, but he, too, smiled compassionately at English furniture and an assumed English accent. Mrs. Bosscackle, as a spinster, had spent a season in Mayfair and made the acquaintance of Lord Saltash. As Hiram put it : " She'll never get quit of him."

When the twins were ten years old, Hiram told his wife that his tenure of all worldly goods was precarious. An organic form of heart disease, brought about by an excess of " pep " and " push," might carry him off at any moment. For seven more years Mrs. Bosscackle lived with this impending sword of widowhood above her head. Dreams of the future were imposed upon her. When Hiram talked of *his* children and *his* plans for them, she nodded and held her peace, because domestic peace was dear to her. She had been born an American, but her great-grandfather had been an English lord. When her husband died she

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By

# HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

*ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE*

found herself in possession of half his fortune. She mourned his loss, sincerely enough, for a full twelve months.

Then she and the twins sailed for England.

Lord Saltash called upon her promptly.

"This gentleman," said Mrs. Bosscackle to the twins, "is your cousin."

"Ought I to kiss him?" asked Hermione.

Saltash laughed and kissed her without more ado. Whereupon young Hiram remarked sharply:—

"Hermie hates kissing. No petting parties for her."

"I'm not a petting party," replied Saltash, pleasantly. "I'm an old gentleman with privileges."

Upon this and more Mrs. Bosscackle smiled graciously. She had a word apart with the head of her family.

"I'm English at heart," she confessed. Saltash nodded, mildly amused. "The children are very American. In spite of my protests they use a Mid-West slang, particularly when excited, which you will hardly understand. What is best over here must percolate slowly to what is best in them." Saltash guessed that what was deemed by a fond mother to be best in the twins had not been implanted by their father. Mrs. Bosscackle went on blandly: "You must aid and abet me."

"To what end?"

"They lack—tone, polish, good-breeding."

"They struck me as—hot stuff."

"My dear Saltash——!"

"I mean it as a compliment. The youngsters radiate heat and light."

"They were born in a detestably hot climate. You like them?"

"Like them? One must, perforce, love or hate them. Time will determine which emotion they will arouse in me. We must leave it at that for the present."

They did.

II.

A MONTH passed. The popularity of the twins increased measurably when it became known that they were "useful" at tennis and past-masters of the art of dancing. Hermione, to the indignation of Hiram, was nicknamed "Honey-pot." Busy bees and drones hovered about her. She flirted delicately with all of them. Saltash, as a mere looker-on, reassured his kinswoman in regard to the drones.

" They won't taste her honey."

The amount of honey in such an alluring little hive had been, of course, grossly exaggerated.

Just before Ascot, the Marquess of Boone began to pay marked attention to Miss Bosscackle. She sat on the box beside him when he drove four blood chestnuts down to Ranelagh and Hurlingham ; she applauded his prowess at polo ; she admitted that he danced passably well for an Englishman. Mrs. Bosscackle purred whenever his name was mentioned. When she asked Saltash if he knew anything about Lord Boone, he replied, guardedly :—

" He is good at games."

Somehow, she asked no more questions. Perhaps a week later on Saltash was confronted by Master Hiram ; and by this time the twins had stormed his affections, being, in their boisterous way, as simple and unaffected as he was.

" Say—who is this guy ? "

Saltash held up an admonitory finger.

" You miserable Yank ! Are you sacrilegiously alluding to one whom the King addresses formally as a noble and puissant prince ? "

" Come off it. I mean Boone. He's made a hit with Hermie. How am I wise to that ? I'll tell you. The silly kid doesn't mention him to me. Got it ? "

Saltash admitted that he had it. The boy went on :—

" It's up to you to tell me all about him. I have a sort of hunch that Hermie might marry an Englishman, just because he's forbidden fruit. I guess Mommer told you about Pop's will."

Saltash looked uncomfortable.

" Nothing beyond this—you and your sister have a still undivided interest in half of his estate."

" That's so—but on conditions. Pop was a good citizen ; so am I. If Hermie marries a foreigner, her money comes to me."

" Bless my soul ! "

The boy, beardless as Adonis but wise beyond his years, continued excitedly :—

" I don't blame Pop. He made his dollars back home, and he wants 'em to stay there. By our laws he couldn't put a cinch on Mommer. Maybe he was scared that she'd come over here. You take it from me that Mommer doesn't care a continental about that old will. She thinks that I wouldn't touch Hermie's little pile. And she's rich enough, anyways, to divvy up with Hermie. Have you got that ? The worry is all on me. I've a notion that this fellow is—junk."

" Junk—— ! "

" Not—all wool, as you are."

" Thanks. Out of the mouths of babes—— ! Well, between ourselves, Lord Boone has not—er—too good a reputation."

" Gee ! I knew it soon as I looked at him. Too much façade ! His goods are in the show window ; and the kid is flattening her nose against it. Mommer doesn't look at him. She's looking up to Heaven, saying her prayers to a God who talks English and thinks the English His chosen people. Mommer is a dam' sight more Britisher than you are. Now, say, we've got to jazz up. No use yapping. We must get to work. Would a mint julep lubricate your thinking apparatus ? "

" No, nor yours."

" Oh, I'm on the water wagon. You tell me, honest Injun, what's wrong with Boone. Show me the spots. Then I can show 'em to Hermie."

Saltash wondered whether he was blushing. The " spots " on Boone could hardly be shown to this boy, who looked about sixteen, nor to his sister. He temporized.

" Now look here, Bud "—this was Hermione's name for her twin, an abbreviation of brother—" we must trust to a decent girl's instinct. Boone is a rank wrong 'un. You dropped on to that. So will she."

" Gosh ! Ain't you an optimist about girls ? Now, in my experience, the girls who make the biggest bloomers over men are the decent girls. What the kid knows about indecency you could put into your corn-cob and not know it was there. I don't say she's innocent ; she's just ignorant of how beastly men can be. He looks a swell. That cuts ice."

" We will speak of this again," said Saltash.

HOWEVER, before the cousins met again, something happened which quickened the " jazzing up." Lord Boone offered to take Miss Bosscackle to the play of the moment. It will never be known whether a mother who had many Victorian characteristics knew anything about the play. Let us hope, charitably, that she didn't. Probably she trusted a man of rank and position. She accorded a majestic consent. Lord Boone was to call for Hermione at two, and after the *matinée* it was arranged that he should take the girl on to Boone House, to introduce her, for the first time, to his mother, who, apparently, had come up from the country to meet the young lady. Over such a thoughtful arrangement Mrs. Bosscackle purred contentedly. It is true that Saltash had hinted to her that Boone was not a marrying man, and at least twenty years older than Hermione. But—hardened bachelors come in due time to the right whistle, and men nearing middle age make

tender and considerate husbands. We leave her purring.

But Bud, as we must call him, had another hunch. He had not seen the play, but he found out that it was hardly the right entertainment for ignorance or innocence. And here again his ingenuous face constrained his informant to withhold salacious details. What he did say was enough for Bud.

He tackled Hermione in her bedroom, where she was surveying joyously half-a-dozen frocks laid upon a virginal bed.

"See here," began the son of a masterful man, "you ain't going to that play."

"But I am, sure. Why not?"

"It's off colour, kid."

Hermione pouted. She adored Bud, but she regarded herself as years older than he.

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"Have you seen it, baby?"

"Nope."

Hermione laughed.

"Sa-a-ay, Bud, I believe you're mad because Lord Boone didn't ask you, but he couldn't. Two stalls were given to him. It's the swellest piece in London. You have to book seats months ahead."

"I'm just mad that you should be going to such a show."

Hermione smiled at him.

"Now, Bud, don't you play the baby boy. Would Mommer let me go if the piece wasn't right, would she? Would Lord Boone take me to the wrong sort of show? Why, never! You sit down and tell me what frock I shall wear."

Bud may not have possessed that enormous experience of women which is the most cherished possession of very young men; but he knew Hermione. So, without another word, he sat down, lit a cigarette, and stared at the frocks.

As he stared, he was saying to himself: "I must fix this on my own. Sis sha'n't go."

Sis prattled gaily about her frocks. Two, out of six, were selected. She held them up.

"I don't blame Pop. He made his dollars back home, and he wants 'em to stay there," said the boy, excitedly.

"Lord Boone has seen me in my melon, and he said the nicest things about it. He—well, he asked me to wear it to-day. But he might like me even better in the pineapple."

"You want him to like you?"

"Now, Buddy, take that little frown off your balcony. Let's see the old smile again. Honest, I b'lieve you know what suits me better than I know myself. Gee! I've a brain wave. You play mannequin. Slip into the pineapple."

Brain waves may occur simultaneously with twins. Bud hesitated a moment,

smiled, and nodded. The pair had worn each other's clothes time and time again. In a jiffy, Hermione fished out of a drawer a pair of silk stockings, stays, and some other articles, which she handed to her twin. He retired to his own bedroom, next door. In less than five minutes he reappeared. Hermione shrieked with laughter.

"My! If you ain't the sweetest thing I ever saw!"

Bud peacocked up to the dressing-table and touched up his face with a powder-puff and a lip-stick. Hermione produced a hat and popped it on to her brother's head. Gloves, shoes, a parasol, a handbag were added to a ravishing *toilette*.

Then Hermione became serious, as she walked round her mannequin comparing "it" with herself. She, in her turn, had slipped on the melon-coloured confection. She exclaimed, emotionally:—

"If there were three seats, Lord Boone could take us both and sit between us. Bud, you sweet girlie, why not come down to lunch and give Claridge's a treat?"

"I'm lunching out," said Bud.

"You never told me?"

"I—I forgot."

"It's nearly one. I simply must wear the pineapple. Hurry up. I'll ring for Justine."

Justine was her maid. Justine was a Parisienne, with a sprightly sense of humour. Justine came and did her duty. Hermione tripped down the corridor to the lift.

III.

AS Justine was putting away the other frocks, Bud came in and began to explain matters to a sympathetic and clever young woman, who nodded gaily and laughed.

"We've a good hour in front of us," said Bud. "You make a job of this, Justine, and I'll hand you a ten-dollar bill. Get in the fancy work."

Justine professed to be enchanted. She did not like Lord Boone. She spoke of him as a "marcheur."

"Bully," said Bud. "I'll walk out with him after the show. I've a notion, Justine,

that his lady mother will give us a miss—she won't connect."

Long before two, Justine put the tips of her pretty fingers to her mouth and blew a kiss to Bud.

"*Mademoiselle est ravissante. Rien ne va plus.*"

Bud blew back the kiss.

"Now, Justine, I'm going to park myself in the entrance hall. His lordship'll be on time, because he told Sis that they mustn't miss the rise of the curtain. He'll roll up, and see a good little, obedient missie."

"*Mais, mon Dieu! quelle bonne farce!*"

"Then you come in, Justine. Sis will be mad as a wet hen; so will Mommer. Let 'em cackle. But you play 'possum. You know nothing."

Justine nodded.

"He may tumble to my voice, but I've caught cold; and I'm going to be the shyest bit of all right that ever sat beside Mister All Wrong. Ain't I scented up too much? These slippers are pinching me."

"One must suffer to be beautiful."

"That's a cinch," said Bud.

IV.

AT the appointed minute, a magnificent Hispano-Suisa car glided up to Claridge's. As Boone strode through the doors, he beheld his "melon," and his lips watered at sight of it. Eagerly he grasped a gloved hand; he ventured to press it. The pressure was returned.

"You wore that frock to please me?" he whispered.

Bud nodded.

In silence, side by side, they took their seats in the car. And here for a moment we will leave them.

Mrs. Bosscackle and Hermione waited in their Louis XV. sitting-room for a belated

He tackled Hermione in her bedroom, where she was surveying joyously half-a-dozen frocks.

marquess. His protracted absence did not make their hearts grow fonder of princes, however puissant. Still, an ambitious mother found excuses for a potential son-in-law. Something had happened. They would receive a message. But no message came. Finally, Hermione, on the edge of tears, went to her bedroom. Mrs. Bosscackle had an engagement. Hermione was left alone with an empty afternoon ahead of her. It occurred to her that a quiet "cry" would do her good. On second thoughts, she rang the bell for Justine. She intended to change her frock, and spend the afternoon with Justine at a picture palace. Before Justine answered the bell she made a discovery. Her "melon" was missing. One more minute and she became aware that other articles had disappeared with it.

She paused, finger upon lip, thinking hard.

"The little devil!" she exclaimed.

Let us say this for Justine: she lied with the superb effrontery of a sometime *midinette*. But Hermione was too much for her. The truth leaked out.

"Revenge is sweet, Justine. I forgive you, but now *you* must help *me*. We will go to my brother's room."

Bud's room was as he left it. A pair of light grey trousers lay upon the hearthrug. Socks, tie, handkerchief (all matching) were upon the dressing-table. Hermione surveyed them blissfully. She turned sharply to Justine.

"Why did he do this?" she asked.

Justine shrugged her shoulders.

"Now, Justine, before I pull on those socks, you pull up yours. Maybe I'll give you that hat I wore yesterday. That depends on you. Why did my brother take my place?"

"He was alarmed."

"What about?"

"Monsieur knows what all the world knows. Milor is a *vieux marcheur*."

She had to explain what she meant. It's an odd thing, beyond masculine comprehension, but enlightenment often comes to young women through unexpected channels. Saltash and Bud had failed to convince Hermione that Lord Boone was other than what he appeared to be. And yet she accepted Justine's indictment of him as convincing. Justine concluded:—

"I myself, mademoiselle, was surprised that Madame should allow you to be seen alone with such a wicked man, but, name of a name, it was none of my business."

Hermione sat down upon the carpet and removed her shoes.

"Brush those pants," she said. "And pick out the dinkiest clean shirt."

"Perfectly," murmured Justine.

## V.

ALONE with Hermione in a saloon car driven by a chauffeur intent on the traffic, Lord Boone allowed his eyes and voice to express what he was feeling. All such men have a *technique pour séduire une femme*. They may advance boldly or with extreme circumspection. That depends on the woman. Boone, possibly, had tired of the woman who expects boldness. He was tremendously attracted to this young girl. He had not the remotest intention of marrying her. He regarded her as an engaging flapper. He believed that she would meet his advances half-way. He summed up Mrs. Bosscackle as a foolish snob. It is likely, too, that a Mid-West diction, and a captivating joy in life, entirely innocent, stimulated jaded appetites. Hermione had confessed to him that she was "out" for a good time.

"Are you easily shocked?" he asked.

Bud whispered back:—

"Yep."

Boone was slightly disconcerted. As he put the question he had edged a thought nearer to his companion, who, as unmistakably, edged away, lying back, eyeing him with a faint smile that might be derisive. Instantly he edged away from her, assuming a paternal tone.

"You know about this play?"

"Not a thing. Is it what you call shocking?"

"My dear, I'm forty" (he was nearer fifty). "Nothing shocks me. I took for granted that you did know about this play. If you know nothing, I am embarrassed. I wouldn't shock you for the world. It's a hot day. Let me take you somewhere else. I have ordered a tempting little tea for you at five. We have nearly three hours, and this is a fast car. Shall we spin down to Hampton—go on the river—see the Palace and the Beauties—lose ourselves in the famous maze——?"

Bud hesitated, pricked by conscience. Had Boone been maligned? He seemed to be behaving like a gentleman. Also, he felt quite sure that Hermione, in his place, would have been warned. She, probably, would have accepted gladly this agreeable invitation to speed through fresh air to Hampton. But Bud, as Bud, wanted to know what this naughty play was like. So he murmured, shyly:—

"I guess the play won't hurt me any. If it does, we can buzz off, can't we?"

"Certainly."

Boone said no more, smiling inwardly. He hoped that a clever young woman was as amused as he was. Of course she knew all about the play, and all about by-play, the sparring for an opening.

The car fell into the long queue, awaiting its turn.

"We are going to have a jolly afternoon," he murmured tenderly.

Bud cooed back :—

"Sure."

VI.

HE fondly believed that he was long past the blushing age, but his youthful cheeks glowed with colour as he passed through the foyer of the theatre and took his seat beside a man known by sight to half the people in the stalls. Boone whispered :—

"I hope you don't mind being stared at."

Bud, covered with confusion, made a slip.

"Gee whizz! I just feel like a snowball rolling into hell."

"You little darling!"

Bud pulled himself together as the curtain rose and the lights in the auditorium went out. When the curtain fell after the first act, Boone, under cover of much applause, asked one question :—

"What do you think of it?"

"It's tabasco, but I can stick it all right. I'm wondering what Mommer would say."

"And I'm wondering whether we shouldn't

Hermione sat down upon the carpet and removed her shoes.
"Brush those pants," she said. "And pick out the dinkiest clean shirt."

have been happier both of us in a punt in some quiet backwater under the willows."

"We can do that any old day."

Boone felt much encouraged. Somewhat to his annoyance a club acquaintance sauntered up. Boone had to present him to Miss Bosscackle, who seemed overwhelmed with shyness. The curtain rose again as the acquaintance sauntered away.

The second act was too much for Bud. As the hardly veiled indecency of it penetrated to his marrow, he clutched Boone's arm.

"I'm fed up," he faltered.

"So am I," said Boone, calmly. "I've seen the play twice. We won't slip off till the curtain falls."

He was positive by this time that a clever coquette was playing a part, and he admired her the more for her art in what he called "speeding up." Had he watched Bud's face during the last scene in the act, he might have amended this conclusion. The boy was scarlet with rage and indignation, thinking of nothing but what he would say when he found himself alone with Boone. The applause at the end of the act infuriated him.

Boone murmured tenderly :—

"Come."

They pushed their way through a crowded corridor into the foyer, where Boone dispatched a commissionaire for his car. Bud was uncomfortably conscious that every man was enfilading him with curious and amused glances. He blushed again, bewitchingly, so Boone decided. As the pair stood together, comments fell sharply :—

"Topping show!—Beats me how it passed the censor.—My good little Joseph, if they don't like it, they can keep away." And lastly, a pistol shot—"Unclean!"

"Dirt!" thought Bud.

At this moment a tall, thin, genial young man appeared in front of Bud, lifted his hat, and said in a familiar Mid-West accent :—

"Why, Hermie Bosscackle, is this you?"

He took Bud's hand and shook it cordially.

"I landed only yesterday. Where you staying? I've struck a dud hotel—reservations all wrong. Fancy meeting Mary's little lamb here! Well, well, well!"

The commissionaire interrupted.

"Your car, my lord."

Bud glanced at the thin young man.

"We're at Claridge's. Call round, Joe."

"You bet! Say, this show is a bit cheesy—too much Limburger for me."

Boone took Bud's arm.

"If you are ready, Miss Bosscackle."

They left the thin young man, slightly agape, and were escorted by the obsequious commissionaire to the car. As the man opened the door, Boone saw a boy sitting in it.

"Why, who the devil's this?"

Hermione piped up shrilly :—

"Just a surprise party. I took a taxi here, found your automobile dead easy, and sat in it. I'd a notion some way that Sis wouldn't cotton to this play. And I wanted ever so much to see your lovely home, Lord Boone."

Bud played up.

"You don't mind my baby brother butting in, do you?"

Boone replied politely :—

"I can forgive your brother—anything."

"Ain't he too sweet for anything?" said Bud. "Solid pie!"

## VII.

WE have a glimpse, nothing more, of the baulked villain of the films and novelettes. In real life, men like Boone never look villains. A prince, not feeling too puissant, smiled grimly, and made the best of the situation.

The twins prattled.

Bud said, drawlingly :—

"Joe Peters is in town; he butted in too."

Boone was not looking at the twins. As the car sped down Piccadilly, his thoughts took a swallow's flight to his garden. Boone House is one of the few great houses in Mayfair that have a garden. Had he been looking at Hermione, he would have noticed that she was blushing.

"Joe," continued Bud, maliciously, "wanted to know what Mary's little lambkin was doing in the wrong fold."

"My!" exclaimed a lambkin, cunningly disguised as a wolf-cub.

"Yes, sonny," went on the relentless Bud. "I—I didn't introduce Joe to you, Lord Boone, because Joe Peters, who is one of our prominent citizens, has a down on lords. That's because he doesn't know any."

Hermione remembered that she was wearing her brother's clothes. At the moment a too high double collar was uncomfortably tight.

"Joe Peters can go back to his Sunday-school," she murmured.

"I felt and looked all sorts of a fool," said Bud, dreamily, "and Joe squeezed my hand so hard that it hurts still. Joe is a gas-bag. Trentopolis will sit up and howl when it hears, through Joe, that I was seen on a muck heap."

"I'm sorry," said Boone hastily. "I—I didn't know."

"You said you'd seen the show before," riposted Bud.

"I mean, Miss Bosscackle, that I didn't

"I'm Hiram Bosscackle, my lord, and this sweet boy, who is squirming and blushing, is Hermione."

know that you would stigmatize the cleverest play in London as—*muck*."

Bud—had Bud been a girl—would have felt rebuked. Annoyance informed Lord Boone's voice, the irritability of middle-age saturated with too strong waters. He experienced a misgiving that he was being laughed at; he was wondering vaguely whether he had made a mistake.

Bud's laughter tinkled delightfully.

"I don't care a cent. As you say, sonny, Joe Peters can go back to his Sunday class. He's your particular friend, not mine. My! ain't I hungry!"

Boone felt reassured.

"Really?"

"You see, I ate no lunch, not a bite."

"But—why not?"

Bud answered coyly:—

"I was so excited at the thought of meeting you."

Hermione's collar grew tighter, but she dissembled.

"How hot it is!" she muttered.

The car rolled through lodge gates and drew up beneath a portico. Boone helped a young lady in "melon" *crêpe-de-Chine* to alight. Hermione hopped out unaided. Three men-servants ushered the twins into a vast saloon. Boone remained in the hall. When he rejoined a somewhat awe-stricken pair, he said, lightly:—

"My mother is not here yet, Miss Bosscackle. We missed the last act, you know. Will you come into the garden?"

Reverentially, the twins passed into the garden. Bud beheld smooth lawns, great trees, a fountain, and a pair of peacocks.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "I wish Mommer was rich enough to buy this from you, Lord Boone."

"My house is not for sale, my dear young lady. But, if I do sell, your mother shall have the first refusal."

The three sat down under the trees. Tea would be served, so Boone said, as soon as possible—*and ices*. To his surprise, the young lady by his side observed coolly:—

"How far off is that store in Berkeley Square, where they make real ice-cream?"

"You mean Gunter's. It is quite close."

"That's bully," said Bud decisively.

"Why?"

"Well, we can't eat your ice cream, Lord Boone. We've got you shot to pieces. The third act of that rotten show takes place here and now. I tumbled to your game."

He paused with dramatic effect. Hermione opened her mouth and closed it. Boone opened wide his slightly washed-out eyes.

"Yes, sir," continued Bud, "I tumbled to your game, and it made me hopping mad, but I ain't mad now, I'm just tickled pink. I'm thinking of the 'par' that Joe Peters will cable to the *Trentopolis Banner*. Joe owns that, and considerable real estate besides. Joe will call around to-night. Joe's folks were born south of Mason-Dixon's line. Joe will want to shoot you, but don't worry, he won't. He'll hang you, for all the world to laugh at, as the blob who tried to play tangle-toes with a boy rigged up in his little sister's clothes."

He jumped up and bowed.

"I'm Hiram Bosscackle, my lord, and this sweet boy, who is squirming and blushing, is Hermione Bosscackle. You're a naughty old man, and we don't like you, not one little bit. Fare thee well! Hermie, it's time to buzz off."

"One moment," said Boone.

He stood up, confronting the twins. Hermione, feeling strangely limp, was clinging to Bud's arm.

"You two have me shot to pieces. I'm not a marrying man, but I'd marry to-morrow if I could have two kids just like you. I've played many games, but my worst enemy has never accused me of being a bad loser. A bad loser is as contemptible as a vainglorious winner. Don't you think, both of you, that your triumph is big enough?"

Hermione burst into tears.

"I guess it is," she sobbed. "I can fix Joe. Joe wants to marry me."

"Huh!" said Bud. "This is stop-press noos. Do you want to marry him?"

"Mebbe I do, mebbe I don't. He must be thinking the very worst of me."

"Turn off the faucit, Sis," said Bud. He turned politely to Boone. "You're dead right. Pop thought the world of publicity, but he didn't advertise his private affairs. This thing shall remain private if——"

"If——?"

"If you will kindly ask that old boob with the chinchilla face fittings to call a taxi."

"Done!" said Boone.

MRS. BOSSCACKLE did not buy a house in London. She returned to her Georgian mansion in Trentopolis. The late Hiram Bosscackle rests in peace in the marble tomb which his widow erected to his memory. But she says that it is an outrage that anti-Prohibitionists who wish to live in England are subject to double income and super tax.

# "——AND FRIENDLESS"

By MABEL GIBSON

*ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS*

THE first time the boy noticed it he was hunting for a room. Across the street it loomed largely to him from the inscription, the whole of which ran, "STATE HOME FOR AGED AND FRIENDLESS WOMEN."

"AND FRIENDLESS," he repeated. It struck him as unnecessary—as a thing that should be privately understood rather than publicly blared forth in letters a foot long directly under one of the old ladies' dormer windows.

Surely it was sad enough, thought the boy, for a lady to be publicly aged without being publicly friendless in the bargain. The Home itself was on the chilly side of the street, and had too many trees of a memorial nature grouped dankly about it to impress him as a wholly desirable haven of refuge after a life so stormy as to deprive an old lady of every friend she had on earth.

He glanced at the inscription again and shook his head angrily.

"Why don't they train that rose over it?" he muttered, addressing himself to business again. And there, if you can credit it, was a feminine hand in the act of placing a small square placard in the window of the brown house behind him.

"*Front room to let,*" he read, as the hand withdrew. He contemplated the house. It was set a little back, so that it had an infinitesimal but charming green terrace in front of it, and a wider strip of green than usual edging the path, where two young maples flourished and spread.

Under them stood a most inviting seat, evidently home-made. The boy sat down on it and considered the upper windows, having a theory that you could judge faces by the eyes and front rooms by the windows.

Finding these to be satisfactory, he got up and rang the bell. The pleasant, vivacious young married woman who came to the door almost forgot to be vivacious, she was so surprised at his inquiry.

"I saw you put it there," admitted the boy with his engaging smile. She fell victim to it at once.

"I just hope you *will* like the room!" she declared.

He found it, if not perfect, so much more nearly approaching that state than most of the front rooms he had inhabited that he took it on the spot, only to remember, when too late, that he would be directly opposite the objectionable "AND FRIENDLESS."

"I wonder how many old ladies live across the street?" he asked, looking out of the window.

"Seventeen," answered Mrs. Beamer. "They must each have four hundred dollars and a black silk dress. We laugh about that," she added, leading him briskly downstairs again.

Just then the boy, who was a story-writer from five o'clock in the afternoon to nine o'clock in the morning, had a flash of insight. A picture of the end of all earthly things came before his inner vision—a picture of an old lady who lay very still indeed, and who wore a black silk dress.

"Well," he answered gravely, "I dare say it's a convenient thing to have by if one is aged and friendless."

Mrs. Beamer shook her head. "But the poor old creatures never wear them. Excuse me, please," she smiled at the foot of the steps. She disappeared into the little living room and came back with the placard, which she began to tear into bits.

"Better save it for next time," suggested the boy.

"Indeed, I hope I sha'n't need it for a long time, Mr. Burke," she said, with a genuine note of liking in her voice.

The boy thought of it as he strode away. It was never difficult for him to win liking, but he had always been such a homeless nomad that he longed for the closer ties Fate had denied him. He was much given to building homes in the air and peopling them with mothers and fathers and grandmothers and all the other essentials of a home, wherein he could have his heart's desire of more than mere liking.

"I might as well be an ingratiating puppy," he thought, whimsically.

NOW Madam Ashly had also thought of the climbing rose in connection with the inscription, but it looked to her as if even the rose shared the general hard-heartedness which had permitted that especial phrasing, for it put forth shoots every way but that way.

"Madam," as they called her at the Home, "aged and friendless," but still with a warm glow of life at heart if not in cheek, could actually put her slim withered hand down and touch the great stone letters. It was what she had hated most about coming, that "and friendless," and the five years she had been there had not lessened her longing to have it away, or at least obscured. She had mentioned it timidly one day to the brother-in-law who had furnished the four hundred dollars and the black silk dress ("cheapest way out," he had said to his wife, who quite agreed).

"Don't you let that trouble you, Cousin Sybella," he had laughed—a loud laugh, storming over the finer feelings that had been troubling him vaguely the past few days. "Why, that's purely technical. I should hope we're your friends!"

"Then why am I here?" cried the soft brown eyes. But the sweet old lips pressed firmly together and were silent.

When he had gone with his foolish laughter, and she was back up in her own room, a wicked intention, as they say in fairy tales, crept under her brown curls, which, clipped short during a fever, had never found the strength to grow long again, and which were grey only in a hesitating and half-hearted fashion.

She leaned out of her window presently, drawing an old pink scarf closer about her in the chilly May air. She found that she could get hold of an adventuring shoot that, if fastened to a higher one, might be trusted to fling flower and leafage where it would do most good. As she held it, pretending carelessness, but fearful of being discovered by some other less sensitive old lady, her heart gave a start. Directly opposite, in an upper window of the sunny brown house with the green terrace, a dark-eyed young man was watching her with absorbed attention. "Would she really do it?" he thought.

With a dignity which assured him that it was really none of his business, Madam Ashly drew a scrap of green silk thread from her basket on the sill and invisibly fastened this year's slender shoot to last year's tough brown one. It made a neat, unnoticeable line of green diagonally across the inscription, and the satisfaction in the sweet withered face grew and grew, until it broke into a radiant smile as her eye caught the boy's for the second time. He smiled back innocently and rapturously, a finger of secrecy on his laughing lip.

"Bless his heart!" said Madam to herself, as she softly closed the window. A sense of friendliness sprang up in her heart towards him. The next morning chanced to be her morning for marketing. Also it chanced to be a national holiday, and as the boy worked where national holidays were strictly observed—for the United States Government, in fact—he was foot-free and care-free for the whole of a sunny day.

So he went strolling up one hilly street and down another, picking out an odd house exterior here, a group of children there, a pattern of blue sky between red housetops elsewhere, until finally he wandered into Market Street at ten in the morning, just when market-day was literally in flower and fruit.

The boy made his way through the market, each stall delighting him more than the preceding one, until he came to a stall of flowers, before which an old lady paused, hesitating between the stall and the backed-up cart from which its treasures had been drawn.

"Why, she's *my* old lady!" exclaimed the boy to himself. She carried a green basket full of vegetables, red tomatoes, curly lettuce, and the like, but was bending caressingly over the flowers, and oh! how the boy's Irish heart yearned towards her. Impulsively he bent forward. A little startled, she looked up in his face, gay, tender, entreating.

"It's the violets," she said, simply. "They carry me back." Then he saw that her longing had not been for the scarlet geraniums, or the double petunias, or the profuse roses, but for a mass of long-stemmed, odourless country violets banked about with wet moss.

"They grew like that in the meadows at home," she said, in a half whisper.

"Let me have them sent up," begged the boy, earnestly.

"They might not like it," murmured Madam, dreadfully tempted.

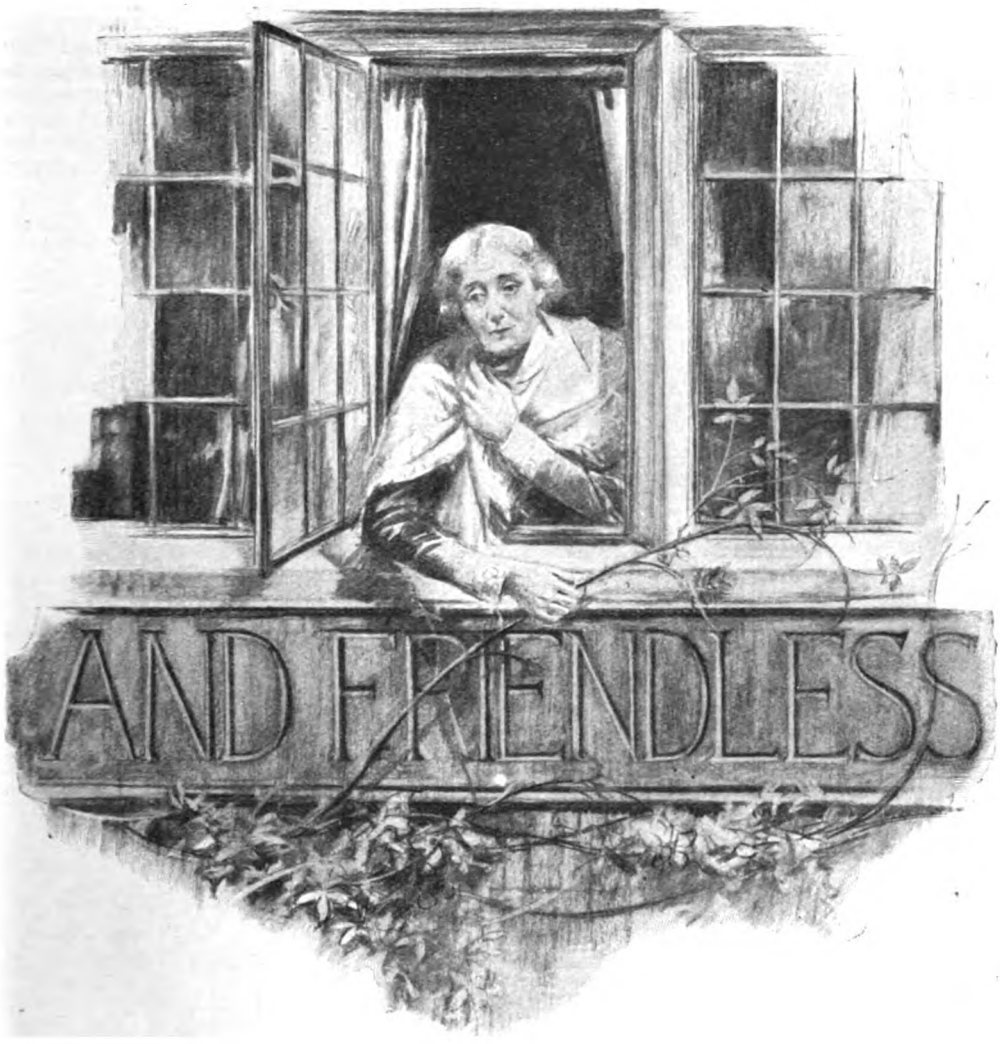
"Such a trifle," coaxed the boy.

She shook her head doubtfully. "But it's sweet of you to want to send them."

"At least let me carry the basket," said the boy.

At the next stall she paused, selecting radishes, and did not notice that the boy tossed a scribbled card to the vender of violets.

Madam allowed him to walk back to the Home with her, and he noted that her eyes were dreamy, and rested lovingly on the things that he loved, on the blue sky and the wind-rippled trees, and the faces of little children along the way.




**She leaned out of her window and found that she could get hold of an adventuring shoot.**

At the gate she possessed herself of her basket. "So we are neighbours," she said, her eyes straying to the inscription. The boy's eyes followed, bubbling with laughter over depths of tenderness. She caught the look.

"In another month," ventured the boy, "it will be hidden in roses."

"I never knew but one boy like you!" cried Madam. "He was a poet—what are you?"

"A Government clerk," teased the boy. Her eager face fell.

"In the daytime," he continued, "but the rest of the time I am Harry Burke, and I write stories."

"I knew it," exulted Madam. "I knew that you did something charming, something that taught you to understand. But there, they are dying of curiosity at the windows, and the matron will be opening the door. Good-bye, neighbour!"

He loafed at his window, scribbling and spying, until he saw a boy with a green paper box trotting up the street.

"Now she has them," he thought, leaning his arms on the sill and watching the dormer window.

Behind it Madam was undoing the string and setting the contents of the box, moss and all, on an old blue platter that had been her grandmother's. "And how did he know my name?" she wondered.

She sat down before the violets as before an altar of beauty and memory, beholding her childish self where they had once gushed forth, a blue tide of spring-time. She had crushed them under her small bare feet and had filled her wee soft hands with their odourless azure. She had spent them laughingly, lovingly, as she had spent youth, wifehood, motherhood, as dear things, sweet things that would be with her for ever. Then the clouds had rolled over her life, long illness, unforeseen death, hopeless disaster.

When the sun shone out again, it had found her a waif, estray, drifting, in her enfeebled state, first to one of her dead husband's relatives, then to another, and at last, "aged and friendless," to the Home, one of seventeen old ladies, each with four hundred dollars and a black silk dress.

She hated the black silk dress, waiting there in her trunk for the end of all earthly things. All her life she had loved soft, pale tints, dainty clothing, muslin ruffles, bits of old lace about the neck. In gentle defiance of the customary, she would have chosen such robing for her last.

It so chanced that, of all the seventeen, she was the only old lady born to books and beautiful manners of thought and speech; the only one to whom these things had descended through many unbroken generations.

Several days later the boy had the audacity to call on her, and without words to convey to the matron the impression that he was the son of a friend of the old lady's youth. At least, such was her statement to Madam in announcing the visitor.

A little startled, she looked up in his face. "It's the

Therefore Madam descended with dignity and begged an explanation.

"I didn't utter one word to that effect, Madam," he protested.

"Then—oh, how you must have *looked* it," she countered, helplessly.

"I did feel that it might be," he confessed. "Did you never know a little blue-eyed, black-haired girl named Nannie Reeves?"

"Never," said Madam, firmly.

"I have her picture," added the boy.

He pulled it from his breast-pocket, a tiny old photograph palely tinted, a darling, dimpled young girl face, with a ribbon of black velvet about the round throat and a red rose tucked in her hair.

"That's Nannie Reeves," said the boy.

violets," she said, simply. "They carry me back."

"She was my mother, and she lived twenty years. I am six years older than she was when she died."

"Don't be sorry," said Madam, gently. "She might have lived to—to train a rose," she ended, unexpectedly. "So you would send the meadow violets," she hurried on. "I shared them with some dear people here. Do you mind?"

"Mind!" cried the boy.

Madam smiled. "Tell me about the stories," she said, unexpectedly.

"I've had some in——" A flash of recollection came to her.

"Why, I remember now, Henry Reeves Burke! One was about a blind lad. It made me laugh—and cry."

"I knew that little chap." His eyes looked into distance; he clasped his knee and sat silent, as if recalling, re-living. "He was the finest I ever saw—that little chap."

"Yes, you got that in the story." Her brown eyes shone. The boy went away thrilled by that sweet, unconscious flattery.

Through the days that followed, he watched the rose as an accomplice in the wicked intention.

June came in a burst of glory. On the fifteenth a branch of pink roses obliterated the "and friendless" with beautiful completeness. Whenever Madam returned from market or from church, she gave the inscription a glance of entire satisfaction, and the brown eyes danced youthfully. Her satisfaction lasted until the Fourth of July—another of the boy's holidays. That day, also, the board of trustees elected to pay a visit of state to the Home. It did not differ from other visits at first: a complaint here, a readjustment there, a private interview with the matron, and, later, refreshments served in the parlour with all the old ladies in attendance. These things bored Madam, but the matron wished all to be present.

All went well until the moment of departure, when Judge Malden, standing with his back to the street, surveyed the Home with a sweeping glance of approval, which suddenly changed to a frown of disapproval.

"What may this mean, matron?" he

asked, ponderously. The board crowded together with upward stare, and the matron looked frightened. "A rose-tree has been permitted to obscure an inscription placed by the State on a State institution," declared the Judge.

"I can't see how it happened, sir," apologized the matron, nervously. "It shall be seen to at once, sir."

Madam stepped forward. "Judge Malden," she said, "I have a little confession to make. The inscription in question is directly beneath my windows, and I trained the rose over it."

"But why, my dear Madam?" asked the Judge. Wonder had replaced disapprobation, and he addressed her in a puzzled but courteous tone.

Madam's face rippled into an irrepressible smile. "It makes it so much prettier, Judge," she explained, daringly.

"The craving of the fair sex to decorate a stern world," said the Judge, addressing the board, "amounts to a mania. But," and he turned to Madam with weighty playfulness, "in this case the decoration is slightly misplaced. If you will allow me passage through your room, I will undertake to bestow those roses to much better advantage."

"Certainly, Judge," assented Madam.

Her shielding sense of humour deserted her as she led the way. She opened her door with a little bow, and the Judge entered, followed by the matron and as many of the other old ladies as could crowd in. But Madam remained in the background, the roseate satisfaction of the past weeks all gone out of her face.

The Judge leaned from the window and carefully severed the branch of pink roses.

"Have you a vase at hand, Madam?" he asked, as he reappeared. Mechanically Madam found him one, and he placed the roses therein and set the vase on the mantelshelf with a fine flourish.

"Behold!" he pointed out to the little audience, "how infinitely better suited is such a decoration to the interior of a lady's chamber."

He withdrew with a gallant bow, and the old ladies flocked after, the matron at their heels. When the last had gone, Madam gently closed her door. The roses attracted her to the mantel. She caressed them resignedly.

"You couldn't help it, dear; you did your best."

Came a light tap on the door. "Come in," she said, absently. It was the boy, audaciously making his way straight to her. His expressive young face was white with anger.

"I saw it, Madam," he cried. "The old scoundrel!"

Madam touched his arm. "Never abuse the people that can't understand, boy. He"—again the irrepressible smile—"gave me these roses."

Then, turning to the table near, she said, soothingly: "Here are my books that I've been telling you of—my little blue editions of Hood and Tennyson and Campbell, and my mother's 'Lady of the Manor,' and my grandfather's 'Spectator.'"

The boy's hand wandered over them nervously, halting on a volume of poems by Edgar Allan Poe.

"Did I ever tell you," she went on, "that my mother knew Poe in Richmond?"

"Oh, Madam!" cried the boy.

"And about the time when I was a schoolgirl in Lexington, and General Lee asked me to take a ride behind him on his famous old Traveller?"

"Oh, Madam!" cried the boy again. "Why, you ought to write the stories."

Her laughter rippled out. "You are a dear boy," she declared. "But you must run away now; we are only allowed callers on certain days. Do you wish to get me a scolding?"

The boy lingered, looking down at her. "Saturday afternoon I have a holiday," he announced.

"It seems to me," observed Madam, "that you Government people have as many holidays as an Italian peasant."

"I'm coming to take you for a walk on this special holiday."

So there was something for Madam to look forward to.

EXACTLY at three o'clock on Saturday the boy crossed a street golden with sunshine and green with shade and bore her away on a wonderful jaunt. He was a delightful companion, but Madam was a better one, because she had lived so much longer for one thing; and they were laughing like two children when the boy called her attention to a cottage high above the street.

A long green yard unrolled to a six-foot stone wall, hedged high to keep you from sliding into the street should you lose your footing. From a wide porch across the front you could see miles up and down the river, and every way you looked over the intervening housetops was a picture for an artist.

"When I go walking," said the boy, "I pick out homes. I never had one, and I find it a fascinating pastime. How does this impress you for a home, Madam?"

"Very well indeed," said Madam, falling into his humour. "And it's vacant. Suppose we go up on the porch and see if it is really all that a home ought to be?"

"I was just about to suggest that very

thing," said the boy, helping her up the various flights of steps. On the topmost Madam turned with a little breathless gasp.

"Yes," agreed the boy, "it's beautiful, beautiful—the river, the bridges, the island, the blue hills beyond, and only a step down the street and life flowing about you, strong, like the river currents! This is the best home I ever found, Madam." He took off his hat and ran his fingers through the damp, dark waves on his temples. "The very best, because"—now something in his vibrant tone set her heart beating faster—"it's true."

"True!" cried Madam, with startled, questioning eyes.

"I bought it yesterday," said the boy, "but maybe I was a fool. Maybe you won't come."

He bent towards her: "I want to take you away from that place."

"What do you mean, Harry?" asked Madam, quietly.

He bent towards her: "I want to take you away from that place." His voice was rapid, earnest, eager. "I want to be your boy. I want you to be my mother." On that last sacred word his voice sank, shaken.

"But your people, dear?" faltered Madam.

"Haven't I told you how alone I am? There are only some little stepsisters. We could bring them here and have a home—a *real home*. It's been pretty lonesome doing without a mother for twenty-six years."

"Laddie!" cried Madam.

The boy stood, flushing, looking down at her with brightening eyes; then, tucking her hand in his arm, descended with her into the swift current of the street. Madam went with it, or against it, once more feeling a part of it, once more with a vivid breathing life of her own to be lived.

Thus, happily, arm in arm they passed through the market-place.

MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS, AND MADELON.—No. 9.

# The Gas Wizard

*By*

## E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

*ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY*

THE MARQUIS was in an evil humour. Neither the sight of that tactfully-proffered *apéritif* nor his niece's ingratiating smile produced the slightest effect upon him. He had worked himself up into this state and he meant to remain angry.

"Four months ago," he declared, thumping the little table before him with his fist, "you, my friend Billingham, joined company with my niece and myself in a partnership—an unwritten partnership, perhaps, but nevertheless a partnership—which was to be devoted to our mutual gain. I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," Mr. Billingham assented.

"We embarked upon various enterprises," the Marquis continued, "and met with some success, but lately, what do we do? We rescue a foolish middle-aged man from the clutches of an adventuress. Not one penny comes to our exchequer. We help a young disabled soldier to carry out a delicate mission. Again not a penny! I ask you how long it is to continue. You others may have sources of wealth unknown to me," he went on, casting a suspicious glance at Mr. Billingham. "As for me, I am penniless. I must live as a gentleman needs to live. How am I to do it, I ask you? You, my friend Billingham, tell me that the common funds are exhausted. My niece here has not even a hundred francs to advance. What then, I ask you, is the use of our partnership? You two amuse yourselves whilst I starve."

Mr. Billingham scratched his chin. He seemed disposed to take a lenient view of the other's demeanour.

"There is some sense in what you are saying, Marquis," he admitted. "At the same time, you might remember that your niece and I saved the money we made in one or two little affairs, whereas you——"

He pointed eloquently towards the Casino. The Marquis sat forward in his chair.

"Listen, then," he interrupted. "I am not a man to accuse a friend of ill-faith. If you assure me that you still maintain your suite at the Hôtel de Paris, your manner of living here, your flowers to my niece, your champagne at our dinners, on the profits of those adventures in which we have been mutually concerned, then you are a very wonderful man. But I will be open. It seems to me that you have been engaged in other enterprises in which we have not been included."

"As to that," Mr. Billingham protested, "you are dead wrong. I may have come into a little bit of my own, but it hasn't been through anything that's happened out here. You're for business again, I take it, Marquis?"

"I have seventeen francs and forty centimes in the world," was the bitter reply.

Mr. Billingham looked at his watch.

"This morning," he announced, "I shall provide luncheon at the Hôtel de Paris. Afterwards you shall both come to my rooms. I will then propound a scheme by means of which some temporary relief may be afforded us."

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"Dear clever man," Madelon murmured. "I have known for two days—since I saw you talking so earnestly with that terrible little Austrian—that something was coming."

"I have an idea," Mr. Billingham acknowledged, "but whether it will result in financial profit or not it is impossible at present to say. I guess we might as well try it out, anyway."

IN Mr. Billingham's sitting-room, an hour later, the Marquis and Madelon on their arrival found their host indulging in intimate conversation with a black-haired and bespectacled foreigner whom he introduced as Dr. Ludwig Stranz. The doctor, who spoke English with a very guttural accent, was a man of heavy build and coarse features, untidily dressed and besprinkled with cigar ash. He was cordial, but without any grace of manner.

"Friends of Mr. Billingham," he declared, "I make myself glad to know. This is a beastly place. You perhaps haf gained money?"

"I most certainly have not," the Marquis rejoined. "Do I gather that you too are a gambler, Dr. Stranz?"

"I am a scientist," was the verbose reply. "I have discovered many wonderful things in my day, though many of my discoveries have been stolen from me and used to their profits by others. I have been to Paris with an idea of my own—useless! Then I come here. I meet my good friend Mr. Billingham. It was he who once found me money for a little invention of mine."

"That was in the days when I had some," Mr. Billingham explained hastily, "before linoleum went back on me."

"Ah, that was a pity that you lose your money," Dr. Stranz declared. "It is a great invention this of mine, now. Even when put to so ridiculous a use——"

"That will do," Mr. Billingham interrupted abruptly. "We will meet as arranged this afternoon, Dr. Stranz. Better perhaps come five minutes before the time arranged and meet me here. We can go through our plans once more so that there need be no mistake."

"It is so arranged," Dr. Stranz agreed, rising to his feet a little reluctantly. "I go to my lonely breakfast."

It was a hint of which Mr. Billingham took not the slightest notice. They all three watched him depart.

"What an extraordinary man!" Madelon exclaimed.

"He is perhaps concerned with the enterprise you spoke of," the Marquis suggested eagerly.

"He is a necessary part of it," Mr. Billingham assented. "But I warn you there is no certainty about this enterprise. It may come off—it may not. At any rate, it is my affair. No one else—though I shall rely upon your help—will be likely to meet with trouble."

"The thought that there is an enterprise to be considered at all," the Marquis declared with satisfaction, "gives to my luncheon an increased appetite. I suggest a descent."

Madelon, who was looking in the mirror, sighed.

"I should like someone to admire my hat," she observed, readjusting it a little.

"Its only fault," Mr. Billingham suggested, "is that it hides too much of your face."

"Its only fault that I can see," the Marquis groaned, "is that it cost too much money."

Madelon made a little grimace.

"Skinflint!" she exclaimed. "I made it myself!"

AT four o'clock that afternoon, just as the *Salons de Jeux* of the Sporting Club were opened, one of the liveried footmen attached to the place announced to M. Louchette, the manager, who was seated in his office, a visit from Mr. Billingham and a friend. Mr. Billingham being a person who during the four months of his sojourn in Monte Carlo had established himself as an *habitué* of some consequence, the manager abandoned his habits of almost papal seclusion and intimated his willingness to receive the two gentlemen. The door was thrown open and they accordingly presented themselves.

"I'd like you," Mr. Billingham said, having shaken hands, "to meet my friend, Dr. Stranz, who has been staying here for a while."

Dr. Stranz bowed and shook hands solemnly. The manager regarded him with some curiosity.

"Ach, what a place!" the former exclaimed.

M. Louchette cleared his throat.

"I trust you have enjoyed your stay here, doctor," he remarked. "What can I have the pleasure of doing for you, gentlemen?"

"For me, nothing," Mr. Billingham replied. "My friend the doctor, whom I met in New York during the war, just asked me to introduce him. If you gentlemen have business to talk over I guess I'll leave you to it."

The manager looked at Dr. Stranz and disliked him.

"No need for you to leave us, Mr. Billingham," he assured him. "What can I do for you, sir?" he added, turning to his companion.

Dr. Stranz sat down ponderously, placing the small black bag which he was carrying with him by his side.

"Sir," he announced, "I haf met with great misfortunes here. I haf lost heavily. I haf lost all my beautiful money."

"Ach, busy!" Dr. Stranz repeated, leaning over and striking the edge of the table before which the other was seated. "You may be busy, but you must listen to me. One—more than one hundred thousand francs of my hard-earned money I have lost here. Something must be done for me."

"Indeed," M. Louchette remarked coldly. "If your business here is simply to tell me this——"

"It is not," Dr. Stranz interrupted. "I would haf you know all of the situation. I come here with one hundred thousand francs—money which has been paid me for my marvellous inventions. I am a great inventor. There is no one who has such a brain as mine. I make everything that blow up. With a projectile as big as a pea I could destroy the Palais at Versailles or the Reichstag in Berlin."

"Very wonderful, I am sure," the manager observed a little impatiently, "but you will excuse me if I remark that I am busy."

M. Louchette looked at Mr. Billingham as though to ask whether the man were a lunatic. Mr. Billingham shook his head.

"I had not received," he said, "the slightest intimation as to what the doctor was wanting. He simply asked for an introduction. I am sorry I brought him if he is a nuisance. Perhaps I had better leave you alone."

"Not on any account," the manager begged hastily. "You are sure that the man is sane?" he added, under his breath.

"Sane I am, but insane soon I shall be," the doctor thundered. "Now I shall show

you whether I am a man of sense or not. I will talk to you plainly. I want my money back."

"If you wish us to make an advance to cover your return fare home and reasonable hotel expenses," the manager suggested, drawing a form towards him, "you can make application for a *viatique* which will receive due consideration. You of course understand, however, that you will not be allowed in the rooms again until the amount is repaid."

"I want my money back," Dr. Stranz repeated doggedly. "One hundred and forty thousand francs—that is just what I want."

"You are wasting my time," M. Louchette declared quietly. "Permit me to wish you good afternoon."

The official's forefinger strayed towards the bell which stood upon his desk. Dr. Stranz stretched out his hand. Something in his expression induced the other to pause.

"More than one hundred thousand francs of my hard-earned money I have lost here. Something must be done for me."

"I have told you," he said, "that I must have back my one hundred and forty thousand francs. I have not told you what I shall do if you refuse."

"A threat!" the manager exclaimed.

"If you refuse I promise you this," the doctor continued earnestly. "At eleven o'clock to-night this place will be—is it not so?—packed with people. At five minutes past eleven you shall find them in the streets, on the promenade perhaps, the pavements, on the stairway, everywhere—but not in those rooms—not in those rooms, I promise you."

M. Louchette looked towards Mr. Billingham, who nodded sympathetically, and, unseen by the doctor, tapped his forehead. The manager smiled tolerantly.

"Well, well," he said, "I am sorry for you, Dr. Stranz, but you must see that there is no reason why I should return your money any more than anybody else's. There are dozens and scores here every season who lose more than you have done. You must come back next year and hope for better luck."

"Will I haf back again my one hundred and forty thousand francs?" Dr. Stranz demanded.

"Of course not," was the firm reply. "Your friend Mr. Billingham will explain to you the absurdity of such a suggestion. You will permit me."

This time the manager succeeded in reaching the bell. Dr. Stranz rose stiffly to his feet.

"Perhaps," he announced, "I will visit you again to-morrow morning."

"It will be quite useless," the manager assured him. "I wish you good afternoon, gentlemen."

A servant entered and held open the door. Mr. Billingham loitered behind.

"Say, I'm sorry I brought him in," he apologized. "I had no idea he was loony. He was a bright fellow enough when I knew him. The war again, I suppose."

"Quite all right, Mr. Billingham," the other remarked a little patronizingly. "We are used to strange visitors."

THE visit of the mad Austrian had almost passed out of the mind of the manager of the Sporting Club. Nevertheless at a few minutes before eleven he left his office and strolled through the rooms. Late in the season though it was, they were still crowded, and with a somewhat brilliant gathering. There was an English duke and an American millionaire playing in maximums at roulette, a noted Greek financier was taking a bank at baccarat, crowds of pretty and well-dressed women and well-known men thronged the place. With a little frown the manager recognized Dr. Stranz seated next to a croupier. He summoned one of his deputies.

"That man's card of admission," he directed, pointing him out, "must be withdrawn. He is a madman, and declares he has lost one hundred and forty thousand francs. Dr. Stranz his name is."

"I will see to it at once, sir," the deputy promised.

Eleven o'clock struck. Nothing happened. Suddenly, however, there was a little murmur. The people at the tables raised their heads. The loiterers in the room made for the doors. There was one expression upon every face—an expression of pained and physical distaste, which speedily became loathing. People who had strolled towards the exits commenced to hurry; others from the remote ends of the room pressed behind them. Finally the players at the tables with one accord rose to their feet, some of them clutching at the money in front of them, some of them abandoning it. There seemed to be a faint white mist drifting about the room, and becoming thicker every moment, and apparently from it there was emitted the most terrible, stupefying, and noxious smell which ever greeted the nostrils of any human being. Every second it became stronger. The manager opened his mouth to give an order, but his lips were powerless. He rushed for the door with the others. In less than sixty seconds the passages leading into the Hôtel de Paris and the stairway—luckily a broad one—leading into the street were packed with a seething mass of shrieking, coughing, half-fainting people. Two of the servants made an heroic effort to open the windows and fell overpowered. The occupants of the bar joined with the waiters in a mad rush down into the back quarters. Here and there a woman fainted. One man, black in the face with coughing, threw himself over the banisters on to the table below. In an incredibly short space of time not a soul remained in the roulette room, except one. Dr. Stranz, with a respirator over his mouth, strange-looking spectacles, and flaps over his ears, looked around him with a smile half-satanic, half-beatific.

"That was good," he said to himself. "Before, it was I who felt sick at heart in these rooms. Now, it is they who feel sick of the stomach!"

AT a few minutes after ten o'clock on the following morning, the card of M. Louchette, the manager of the Sporting Club, was brought in to Mr. Billingham, and M. Louchette himself promptly followed. Mr. Billingham welcomed him with a grin.

"Say, that was some trick the Austrian played us!" he observed, as he shook hands.

M. Louchette was a man destitute of any sense of humour. For five minutes without ceasing he talked, and Mr. Billingham listened in admiration.

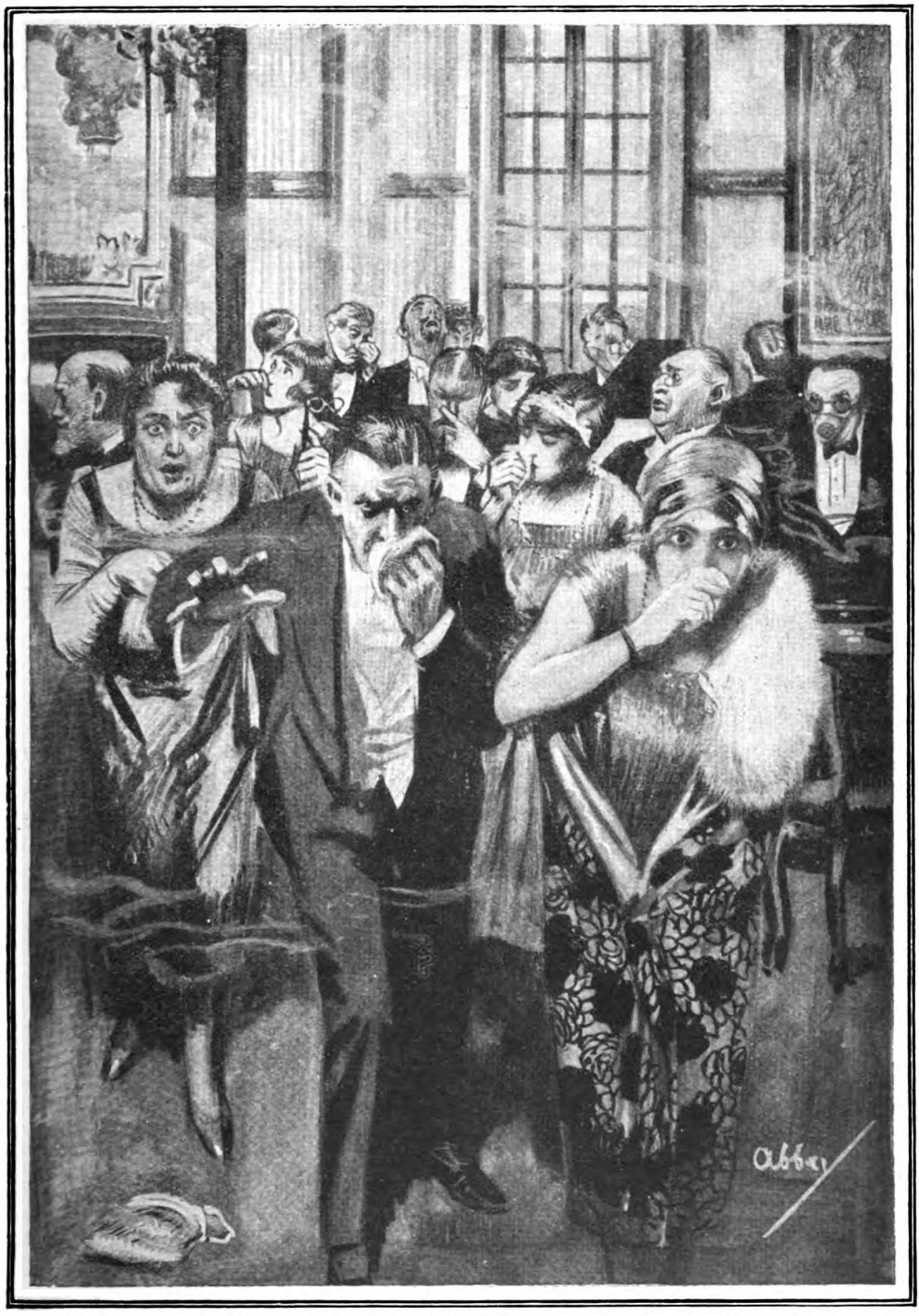
"And then some," the latter remarked, when through sheer lack of breath his visitor became silent. "But say, to get down to business, what are you going to do about it?"

"The police search now for the rascal," M. Louchette declared. "He shall be made to pay damages. He shall be imprisoned. Such an outrage has never before been known!"

Mr. Billingham stretched out his hand for a cigarette and thoughtfully lit it.

"I don't know how the law goes on this side," he remarked, "but in my country I'm not sure as it's a criminal offence to make a smell—even if it could be proved that he did it."

M. Louchette was off again. A smell! It was in such cold-blooded fashion that his friend Mr. Billingham could allude to the ghastliness of what had happened? There had been a soldier there who had declared




There seemed to be a faint white mist drifting about the room, and apparently from it there was emitted the most terrible smell.

that never in his worst experiences of the war, when they had been caught without masks, had anything so hideous crept into their nostrils. There were ladies lying sick in their rooms in every hotel in Monte Carlo. The lost-property office was besieged by an endless stream of men and women who had thrown away everything to escape from this horror. And Mr. Billingham could call it " a smell " !

" It was nifty," Mr. Billingham admitted, when at last the manager had once more come to a pause. " I worked once in a tan-yard when I was a boy, and I have been down in the hold of a Chinese yawl, and I know San Francisco pretty well, but I guess the doctor had all other smells beaten to a frazzle. Fortunately," he went on, " my young friend, Mlle. de Félan, and I were near one of the doors, and we got away slick. If it is a fair question, M. Louchette, what do you really think you're going to do about the fellow ? "

M. Louchette's former eloquence seemed vapid compared to his present expressions. The mad Austrian, it appeared, was to be drowned in burning oil, guillotined, and deported. In the midst of it all there was a modest knock at the door, and Dr. Stranz was announced.

" I do not intrude, I trust," he said. " I wished for a word with my friend Mr. Billingham. Ah, it is M. Louchette, the manager of the Sporting Club ! Good morning, M. Louchette. Are your rooms aired this morning, and what about my money ? "

M. Louchette sprang forward, but Mr. Billingham's firm arm restrained him. Nothing, however, could check the torrent of speech which proclaimed his opinion of the new-comer, his intentions with regard to him, and his certain future. Dr. Stranz listened with amusement.

" That policeman," he confided, " he has been to see me already, but what can I do ? There was a smell in your rooms last night. Who knows that I made the smell, and if I did, what is the law against one who makes a smell ? Your policeman, he has gone back to consult a judge. I have done nothing. I want my one hundred and forty thousand francs, but I have done nothing. If I get my money and I leave, perhaps there will be no more smells."

" Apart from anything else," M. Louchette found breath to say, " there was money missing last night from the croupier's box near where you were seated."

Dr. Stranz drew himself up with dignity.

" I am a man of great honour," he declared. " I have never stole from anybody. All that I took with me from the Club last night I won. Why do you not give me back my one hundred and forty thousand francs ? Then I think there will be no more smells."

" You rascal ! " M. Louchette gasped. " You will never cross the portals of the Club again. Your name has a black mark against it for ever. Before the day is out you will be in prison."

" I think not," was the mild reply. " I think no man can go to prison in Monaco for making a smell—if I did. So you keep me out of the Sporting Club, eh ? Listen ! You give me my one hundred and forty thousand francs and I will leave to-night."

" I will see you in hell first ! " M. Louchette thundered.

" What a pity ! " Dr. Stranz sighed. " Mind you, I do not say I have done anything, but I tell you this : there is not in the world any chemist so clever as I—not in the whole world, mind. You think once more."

M. Louchette broke partially away from Mr. Billingham, and Dr. Stranz made for the door. On the threshold he looked back.

" You make a mistake—a great mistake ! " he called out, departing and slamming the door behind him.

" What do you know about that ? " Mr. Billingham exclaimed.

M. Louchette took up his hat.

" I came," he declared, " to ask if you could tell me anything more about this man."

Mr. Billingham shook his head.

" I can tell you that he was in charge of a poison-gas factory during the war," he said. " I had a plant in the same city making aeroplane wings. That's how I came across him. ' The Gas Wizard ' they called him."

" Do you suppose he has really lost one hundred thousand francs at the tables ? " M. Louchette asked, abruptly.

Mr. Billingham shrugged his shoulders.

" I am not a heavy player myself," he replied. " I have seen him get through quite a pile, but I kept no tabs on him."

"Anyway," M. Louchette remarked, with satisfaction, " he won't get to the Sporting Club to-night."

" I guess there are a good many others who won't either," Mr. Billingham opined.

MR. BILLINGHAM and Madelon dined alone that evening. The latter was a little nervous ; Mr. Billingham inclined to be facetious.

" This afternoon," he announced, " I have been to the Law Library up at Monaco with an interpreter. So far as I can see, the penalties against a maker of smells are purely nominal."

"There are other things," Madelon reminded him. "I hear M. Louchette complains that a great deal of money was taken."

"Dr. Stranz assures me that he did not take anything with him except what he won," Mr. Billingham declared. "I guess he was telling the truth."

"What did M. Louchette say this morning?" Madelon inquired.

Mr. Billingham grinned.

"If the doctor had not made a somewhat inopportune arrival in my rooms," he replied, "I'm dead sure that with careful handling Louchette would have opened his pockets. As it was he lost his temper; but if to-night—well, we shall see! I hear there are twenty-four detectives in the Club, and if Dr. Stranz tries to put in an appearance there will be trouble. Fortunately he won't."

"I shall be glad," Madelon sighed, "when he is out of existence altogether."

"Don't say that," Mr. Billingham begged. "He has given a little colour to a somewhat dull period. Besides which he promises to be an extremely profitable creation."

"Money, always money!" she sighed. "I wonder whether I am getting tired of being an adventuress?"

He looked at her a little wistfully.

"There is another world," he said, quietly —"a world where pleasure is less of a business, perhaps, and happiness——"

"You are going to make me sentimental," she interrupted. "Come, we must have our coffee, and it is time that we went."

"The first table to the left in the 'Kitchen,'" Mr. Billingham reminded her, firmly. "I shall meet you in the gardens—the seat I showed you. You have—everything?"

She nodded.

"Do you not see in how careful a fashion I am carrying my bag?" she asked.

A SMALL crowd of detectives awaited developments in the Sporting Club that evening and a lackey stood by each window. Nothing whatever happened. At half-past eleven, however, the events of the night before were repeated with even more terrifying consequences in both the Casino and the *Salons Privés*. Precautions had been taken here also with regard to the windows, but the spread of the fumes was too rapid and stupefying to allow of more than one or two being opened. The crowds which thronged the two rooms gave even more poignant evidences of terror and panic than the visitors to the Sporting Club on the previous evening. Several croupiers attempted to keep their places, but fell forward in a moment or two overpowered. As a safeguard the various exits to the *Salons Privés* had all been thrown open, and from here the flight, although precipitate, was conducted with a certain amount of order. The Marquis, who had been seated next to a croupier at one of the end tables, seemed to have possessed himself of some of the perquisites of the absent Dr. Stranz. At the first symptoms of alarm he slipped a respirator over his mouth, spectacles over his eyes, and flaps over his ears. He sat there, watching the scene for a few moments with every appearance of interest. To his amazement, notwithstanding the general exodus, two women who had been playing on the other side of the table also remained in their seats, although they gazed around them with many exclamations of astonishment. The Marquis looked at them, then at the wheel which he longed to spin, and the brass box with the *mille* notes which he longed to investigate. His whole environment was irresistible. He produced from his pocket a hundred francs plaque and four louis, and held them poised in his left hand. With his right forefinger he spun the wheel. The ball sped round in jerky fashion and alighted in number twenty-nine. The Marquis adjusted his eyeglass, to be quite sure that there was no mistake, and promptly deposited his counters upon the number indicated. With painstaking care he counted out from the croupier's well six thousand three hundred francs, stuffed the amount into his pocket, and rose to his feet. One of the women who had been regarding him intently—the fatter and fairer of the two, a woman wearing a dress of bright blue silk and a heavy gold chain around her neck—turned to her companion, who was obviously her daughter, a smaller replica of herself. In her excitement she spoke in German.

"Gretchen," she cried, "where do they all go, these people?"

The daughter sniffed the air for a moment, her fat little nose uplifted.

"I am not sure, but I think they smell something, mother," she announced, also in German.

The Marquis abandoned his solitary amusement, rose sadly from his place, and walked across the room, strewn with evidences of feminine flight, towards the lift.

WHILST Mr. Billingham still slept upon the following morning, there was a knock at his door, and M. Louchette was announced. It was a very chastened M. Louchette. He was accompanied on this occasion by another functionary whom Mr. Billingham recognized as one of the principals of the Casino.

"Say, you're bright and early!" Mr. Billingham complained, sitting up in bed and yawning.

"We apologize," M. Louchette said, "but the circumstances may perhaps excuse us. We have searched the place for this man, Dr. Stranz. We cannot find him."

"We seek your aid," the other functionary confided.

Mr. Billingham swung out of bed and wrapped himself in a dressing-gown.

"Gentlemen," he explained, "this man is no friend of mine, but he has asked me to respect his confidence as to his whereabouts. What am I to do?"

"We are prepared to make terms," M. Louchette announced.

"In that case," Mr. Billingham replied, "take a seat. Order some coffee if you will, and wait whilst I have my bath. Dr. Stranz will be here at nine o'clock."

"Stop!" M. Louchette exclaimed. "Mr. Billingham, you are a well-known citizen of a country we respect; your name and reputation are beyond question. Will you undertake negotiations for us with this abominable person?"

Mr. Billingham considered the matter.

"Why, I should say so," he consented. "What's the great idea?"

"He says that he has lost one hundred and forty thousand francs," M. Louchette continued, drearily. "We have that sum here in notes. We will give it to him provided you can extract some guarantee that the proceedings of last night and the night before shall never be repeated by him, or by anyone else with his connivance or help."

"It seems a lot of money to part with," Mr. Billingham observed.

"Nevertheless, it is the decision of the Council," M. Louchette replied. "One hundred and forty thousand francs is a great deal of money, but a repetition of the scenes of the last two nights would be utterly and entirely disastrous. If you can arrange this

**To the Marquis's amazement two women remained in their seats, although they gazed around them with many exclamations of astonishment.**

matter for us, Mr. Billingham, the *Société de Bains de Mer* will consider themselves in your debt."

"I guess I can fix it if anyone can," Mr. Billingham promised. "Leave the money and come back at half-past ten."

They left the money.

MR. BILLINGHAM had chosen a table that morning on the terrace at the Réserve Restaurant at Beaulieu. A striped umbrella sheltered him and his guests—the Marquis and Madelon—from the sun. The west breeze across the bay was only a delight. Furthermore, Mr. Billingham had ordered the luncheon with peculiar care. There was caviare—the only pot in the South of France—served with ice and lemon—large caviare, dull, of the colour of olives, procurable only by an epicure of boundless means and boundless influence with those who control the kitchen. Then there was a bouillabaisse, to serve which the *chef* himself had arrived from the kitchen, a chicken which was a speciality of the house, wild strawberries, prepared with red wine and a cunning mixture of liqueurs. Champagne followed the chablis and the brandy was served from a *bidon*. The whole meal was a wonderful effort.

"Never have I eaten better," the Marquis declared, as he selected a cigar.

"A banquet!" Madelon murmured. "And now, please tell us everything."

Mr. Billingham lit his cigar.

"I thought that for this little celebration," he explained, "we were perhaps just as well outside Monte Carlo. However, the news is of the best. The *Société de Bains de Mer* has granted Dr. Stranz a *viatique* of—what do you think?"

"Five thousand francs," the Marquis guessed.

"Don't keep us in suspense," Madelon begged.

"Of one hundred and forty thousand francs," Mr. Billingham announced, impressively. "The forty thousand francs I have already parted with."

"For the smells?" Madelon exclaimed.

"Precisely—and to cover Dr. Stranz's losses, which I understand amounted to nearly four *milles*. If ever I need a friend who can make smells he is at my service. I had hard work to escape from his embraces."

"And the remaining one hundred thousand?" the Marquis gasped.

"The remaining one hundred thousand is for us three," Mr. Billingham declared.

The Marquis's fingers trembled.

"It is incredible!" he murmured.

"It is the adventure of our lives!" Madelon faltered.

Mr. Billingham produced three packets of *mille* notes; one he returned to his own pocket, the other two he handed to his companions.

"Marquis," he said, "I congratulate you. The idea was mine, but a considerable part of the execution was yours and Mlle. Madelon's. The organization certainly never dreamed that the real Dr. Stranz left Monte Carlo twenty-four hours ago, perfectly well content, with my forty thousand francs in his pocket. They believe that he departed at noon to-day with one hundred and forty thousand. However, the result to them is the same and they can afford the money. They paid that the *contretemps* of the last two nights might not happen again. They will have value for their money Those *contretemps* are finished!"

"We only had six little bottles," Madelon remarked.

"You have now a little over thirty-three thousand francs in your pocket, Marquis," Mr. Billingham concluded. "You will not reproach us any longer, I trust, with those few efforts towards philanthropy which have wasted some of our time. On this occasion we have taken the great lesson to heart that philanthropy begins at home. There is also a little trifle which we have not mentioned—a little trifle to which I believe you helped yourself."

The Marquis coughed.

"I helped myself to nothing that I did not win," he replied. "Incidentally, I discovered—the night of the second smell—how to win at roulette."

"Tell us," Madelon begged.

"That might be worth hearing," Mr. Billingham observed.

"Stake your money," the Marquis said, impressively, "after the ball has ceased to roll!"

*(Next month: "Christian the Concierge.")*

# DRAKE THE MAGNIFICENT

By

# ALBERT KINROSS

*ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY DAVIS*

"COAL has gone to Hell, shipping's gone to Hell, and I'll be going to Hell myself soon, if I don't find something—and pretty quick!" mused Drake, returning to London after his brief and hopeless tour in the North. It was the same everywhere, collieries closing down and shipyards idle. He too was one of the unemployed, it seemed, though he didn't look it. Drake had always made a point of looking prosperous; it suited him, it was good business, it paid. And he was the right kind of man to carry off prosperity, tall, well-built, and handsome. But, by Gad, he thought, he must find something!

He had come to that stage which often assails a shipwrecked man, or one in danger of his life. He was turning over the good times he had had; and here his mind, somehow, always came back to New York. To other places, other days, as well; but it always finished in the same place. Those Americans had, indeed, given him a good time—the time of his life! Literally, that. The time of his life, he repeated. He recalled now how he had described his visit as "Mr. Sponge's American Tour," and how everybody had laughed. There had been no end to their hospitality, and it had never been oppressive. He had done his poor best to return it; and sometimes, even to-day, when he saw those tourists with their horn spectacles and different clothes coming down the Strand, clutching guide-books, he had an impulse to stop them and say: "Look here, you gave me such a good time when I was over there; is there anything I can do for you here?"

In London, at his rooms, he found bills and letters, but mostly bills; and at his club he found letters and bills, more bills than letters. The letters didn't amount to anything; still, there was one he kept and answered straightaway by going to the telephone and ringing up Hatt's Hotel in Dover Street.

"Mr. Brandon in?"

"I'll see, sir," came the answer; 'will you hold on, please?"

He held on.

Presently he heard a voice ask: "Who is it?"

"Drake."

"Why, Mr. Drake; I am glad!"

"Not half so glad as I! Look here, Mrs. Brandon and you and the girls are dining with me to-night, and I've got tickets for a play, and we've a table at the Daybreak Follies afterwards, and if you want to go on dancing——"

"But I was going to ask you to dine with us. We're rather a crowd, and the girls have got two young men——"

"Bring 'em along."

"Well, it's mighty good of you, Mr. Drake, but——"

"But—there's no 'but' to it! You seem to have forgotten something."

"What's that?"

"That I've been to New York."

"Well, we tried to give you a good time."

"And I've been trying to get even with you all these years, and I never get anywhere. You'll give me a chance as well as a pleasure to-night. Mrs. Brandon well?"

"First-class."

"My compliments, and I'll see you all at seven, and I'll be delighted."

"So will Mrs. Brandon and the girls. Seven o'clock, then. It's mighty good of you."

They had finished; and next there were

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the tickets to get for the play, a table at the Epicure, and another at the Follies. And there was the bank; he was overdrawn, but Hayden would spring another hundred. This was to be the last burst, the final flutter; and perhaps Brandon, who was in Big Business—but, no, he wasn't asking for anything. They had given him such a wonderful time, and it was the least he could do, a real opportunity. His only quarrel with it was that it hadn't come a year or two ago, when things with him were different. On the way to the bank he dropped in at Gerard's and ordered them to send a huge bunch of roses to Hatt's Hotel; and at Cavanagh's he bought a large round box of chocolates as big as a wheel—it would please the two Brandon girls; and at Batchard's he chose a half-dozen novels—American women liked novels. At the moment, he could think of nothing else.

He had met the Brandons in New York, he had stayed with them at their place on Long Island, and ever since they had exchanged cards at Christmas; but this was their first visit to this side. And even now they were only passing through; to-morrow they were going on to Paris. So Brandon had said in his letter, the one that Drake had found at the club.

After lunch he rang up Kitty Mesurier and asked her to join the party. He knew that Brandon liked a pretty woman, and if she had a handle to her name, so much the better; and Kitty always hit it off with Americans and knew their ways and country.

Kitty could come. He called for her in one of the two big Daimlers he had hired for that evening. His own Rolls-Royce had gone to settle one of those infernal overdrafts. White-waistcoated, superb, with crush hat, and a gardenia in his buttonhole, he drew up at Hatt's Hotel on the stroke of seven and handed Kitty out.

The Brandons were in their suite on the first floor: the two young ladies, their two young gentlemen, and Mr. and Mrs. Brandon.

"Say, aren't we rather a crowd?" Mrs. Brandon had greeted him, and had finished off with the question.

"I've brought Lady Kitty Mesurier, so we'll be more crowded than ever," said Drake. "Lady Kitty—Mr. and Mrs. Brandon, the Misses Brandon—there I stop." He was smiling at the two young gentlemen, nice, clean-looking young fellows in Fifth Avenue clothes.

"Mr. Gordon Butler and Mr. Lewis Cozzens," said Mrs. Brandon; "so we all know one another now, and I haven't said 'Thank you.'"

"Nor I—nor I," added the two girls. They were evidently referring to the roses, chocolates, and novels sent up earlier in the day and now scattered about the sitting-room.

"What about a little dinner to begin with? I've got tickets for 'Babette'; it's everybody's play, so we won't quarrel—good music and good acting," rattled Drake.

The ladies were all but ready, and delighted, it appeared, to see something of London under the wing of an expert. They had been just tourists up to now, Mrs. Brandon explained.

The two big Daimlers were waiting, each with a smart chauffeur; they looked like private cars with private servants. Drake escorted Mrs. Brandon, and Brandon had paired off with Lady Kitty; the young people followed in the second car.

AT the Epicure, one of those quiet but superlative restaurants where there is no music save the music of a perfectly served and perfectly chosen meal, they found the round table which Drake had reserved ready for them and a waiter for every two places. It was like the dinner that you get in a great house, with a *cordon bleu* and rows of footmen.

The Brandons appreciated it and made a note of the address.

"Tell Monsieur Jules that you're a friend of mine," said Drake; "it makes a difference."

"All the difference between getting a table and not getting one," laughed Lady Kitty; "but your Monsieur Jules is horribly expensive."

"I guess he can pick and choose his guests," said Brandon.

"Yes, he makes rather a point of doing that."

Drake indicated a few of the picked and chosen, including a prince and princess of the royal blood.

They talked of Sherry's and Delmonico's, now, alas, fallen on evil days; indeed, Drake learnt with regret that Prohibition had killed Delmonico's. They had given him a party there the night before he left for Chicago, and every guest had handed him a letter of introduction to someone valuable in that city. No, he could never repay them, not even if it meant his last shilling!

"You must come over again in the fall—what you people here call autumn—and stay with us," urged Mrs. Brandon.

Her husband warmly seconded this proposition.

"Nothing would please me more, if I could only get away."

"You busy men," laughed Mrs. Brandon; "you never know when you've been busy enough! You call us dollar-chasers, but you English are just as bad."

"Worse," said Drake; "but we do get a

little more fun for our money, you must admit that." He was alluding to the iced champagne which the waiters were pouring from the large, gold-throated magnums.

At the theatre the party was divided between the two big boxes which Drake had secured at a price ; for the house was crowded and " Babette " was that rare thing which the theatrical world dreams of but rarely manages to secure—a light opera that will run a year to full capacity.

The Brandons were delighted with it ;

" I've brought Lady Kitty Mesurier, so we'll be more crowded than ever," said Drake.

and, "We tried hard for seats last night, but couldn't get 'em," said Harry Brandon.

"It was none too easy to-night," Drake admitted, with a smile.

"Frank is rather wonderful," added Lady Kitty; "he usually succeeds in getting his own way."

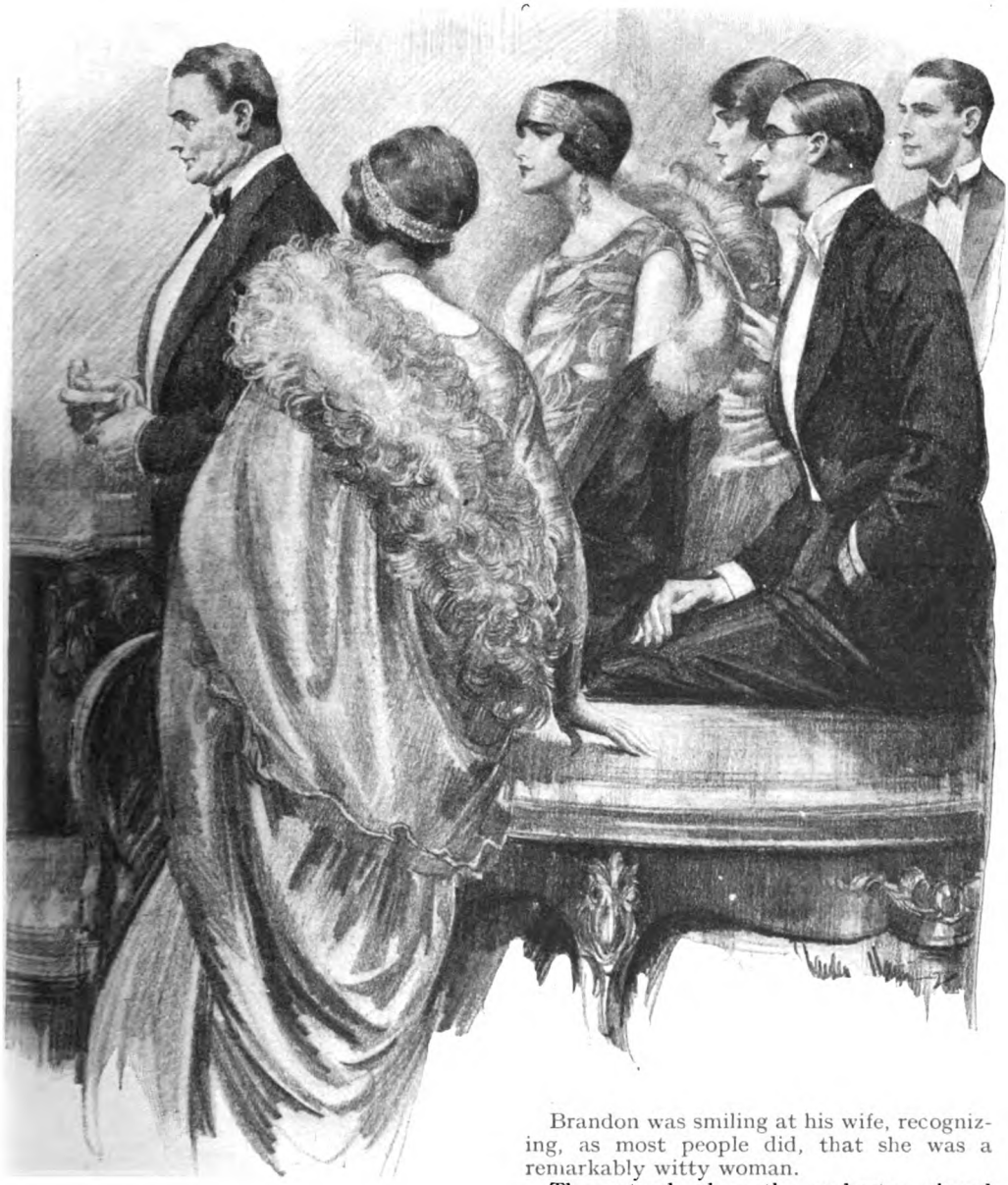
"I guessed so," said Brandon.

Drake had friends here and seemed well known.

"When you were in New York," said Mrs. Brandon, "why didn't you tell us that you were such a celebrity?"

"You treated me like one—or two, or three, or half-a-dozen, didn't you?"

"You've only yourself to blame for that," she answered.



Brandon was smiling at his wife, recognizing, as most people did, that she was a remarkably witty woman.

They stood when the orchestra played "God Save the King," and the Brandons were amused at that; just as Drake, when in

New York, had always felt that something was missing when a play came to an end over there and nobody played anything.

The Daimlers were waiting for them when they came out.

"So this is London?" said Mrs. Brandon. "You're making it very real to us, instead of only a show."

"Isn't that partly why I live here?" asked Drake.

They joined the procession that was going on to the Daybreak Follies, a cabaret entertainment that was just now filling the supper-room of a big hotel.

As before, a table was awaiting them, and a special *menu* which Drake had rehearsed carefully in advance with the chief *maître d'hôtel*. That lordly personage himself received them and led the way to a place of honour.

Drake pointed out the notabilities as these came in; theatrical stars, men and women of rank and fashion, a well-known author, a famous portrait-painter, and two members of the Government. Four or five of these people bowed to Drake and Lady Kitty.

The Brandons, and especially their young people, enjoyed this new diversion, and Drake caught at their gaiety and made it his own, forgetting to-morrow even more effectually and having as good a time as any of the rest. Two o'clock, with supper over and giving them fresh courage, found them all dancing, the ice quite broken, and everybody in perfect fettle. Lady Kitty had been round with the two young men, Drake had partnered the girls, and Harry Brandon and Mrs. Brandon had done their duty with the best. Now Drake was insisting that they should wind up the night at one of his clubs. He was a member of the most exclusive.

The two big Daimlers were turned on once more and nosed their way across Trafalgar Square, and so to the Regal; London lay almost empty, and very impressive under a full moon. Ordinarily, one did not notice its space and its solemnity.

A good band and a perfect floor were waiting to receive the party. They danced till close on four o'clock; then Harry Brandon cried a halt.

"You forget, children, that we've to catch the Paris train to-morrow, or is it this morning?" he reminded them. "We'll pass a vote of thanks to Lady Kitty and Mr. Drake and then go home."

"One more dance!" the girls pressed him.

He yielded, but after that stood firm. On the drive back to Hatt's Hotel and before the doors of that noble hostelry, everybody remarked on the great time Drake had given them, and Drake himself was almost forced to admit that he had nearly got even. "Only nearly," he laughed; "if you had stayed another week, I might have managed it."

"And you'll come over in September?" from Mrs. Brandon.

"Do come!" from both the girls.

"I'll try my hardest."

"That's right," said Brandon.

The American party went indoors, leaving Drake with Lady Kitty.

He helped her into one of the cars, sending the other driver back to the garage with a handsome tip.

"Why did you do it?" asked Lady Kitty.

"I've told you. They gave me the best time I've ever had or ever will have; so it was up to me."

"But you're ruined, or nearly ruined!"

"Can't help that. And a little more ruin won't hurt, will it?"

Lady Kitty leant back in the car, thinking hard.

"It wasn't a bluff?" she asked, suddenly.

"No."

"But why don't you ask this Mr. Brandon for something? I'm sure he'd be most happy to oblige."

"It isn't done, Kitty; and it'd spoil it all."

"Why?"

"That wouldn't be getting even; it'd simply be piling the debt higher."

"Well, you're magnificent"; and next, "What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'll find something, if it's only a few hundreds a year for a start."

"Look here, Frank, if you want a thousand or two to go on with, I'm pretty flush; and there's no obligation. I may be a widow, but I'm not designing."

"Kitty, you're a brick; but I'll manage. I'm rather at my best going uphill, top gear and all."

They had come to her door in Curzon Street.

"Good night, Frank, and thanks for the beano. But I'd have asked this Mr. Brandon."

They were old friends. They parted without further ceremony.

UPSTAIRS, in the front bedroom of their suite at Hatt's Hotel, Harry Brandon was addressing Mrs. Brandon.

"Do you know why we stopped over in London?" he had asked.

Connie Brandon waited.

"I wanted to get this man Drake to manage our European end. I'd always thought pretty highly of him."

"And don't you now?"

"Well, it's like this, Connie. We couldn't offer him more than twenty-five thousand dollars—that's five thousand of their English pounds—a year, and what's that to a man like Drake?"

# IT'S A WISE FATHER WHO CAN ANSWER HIS OWN CHILD

By

## CHESTER T. CROWELL

This article by the well-known American writer of short stories and articles is one which will greatly interest all fathers and mothers.

ALL my life I have heard that children annoy their parents by asking silly questions. Knowing no facts to the contrary, I assumed that the generally accepted statement on this subject must be true, and prepared for quite a bombardment as our flock grew to five.

They were the first little ones that I had really known. But through them I have since become acquainted with quite a number of children. Much to my surprise, I have found their conversation, particularly their questions, every bit as intelligent as those of grown persons—and very frequently more so.

The fact that you are unable to answer a child's question—and I often find myself in that position—certainly does not prove that the question is silly. It is far more likely to mean that the question aims so directly at a fundamental problem that no one has been able to answer it.

Some of the finest examples of the honest, inquiring mind, uncorrupted by false premises or guesswork philosophies, that I have ever encountered were exhibited by children about four years of age. No matter how erudite a scientist or philosopher may become, I do not believe that

he can improve upon the integrity of method employed by a bright child of four.

Comparison is fair, because the wise man and the child are doing precisely the same thing; namely, trying to increase their store of truth. But the adult, by the time he is thirty-five years of age, has waded through so much trash that he is lucky if the very course of his efforts has not gone astray. The child, having had no such experience, possesses a marvellously accurate compass, even though he doesn't know the sea.

I am tempted to say that any person who finds children's questions silly had better look himself over a bit—there is a chance that he may be growing sluggish mentally.

I ASSUMED the *rôle* of father with just about the usual preparation, which is to say, none at all. And I have worked at it in just about the usual manner, which is to say, irregularly and with only hazy notions of plan or purpose. Therefore my remarks on the subject are to be taken for just what they are—remarks, not preachments.

Heaven knows I'm no expert. If I have any message at all, it is possibly to indicate some of the things a parent can get from his children. As to what he should do for them I have never been sure. Indeed, I doubt if a man could have been more ignorant about children than I was when the nurse attempted to place our first-born in my arms, and nearly caused me to collapse from sheer panic. Cold perspiration broke out on my forehead, my knees were weak, and I felt as though I had been hit in the stomach. Several days later I had the same sensations when I looked on while the nurse bathed the baby. I didn't know how firmly those little limbs were fastened on, and the horrible thought assailed me that the child might come to pieces. That's the kind of father I was.

To a busy man time passes rapidly. Three years skipped away in what seemed to me a few weeks, and presently the little lady whose introduction had so unnerved me was asking questions. There she stood, wearing a halo of blonde curls, her eyes alive with interest, adorably dimpled knees peeping out from under her tiny skirt. The very idea of her asking questions! But she wanted to know a lot of things about God. I sat there dumbfounded, blinking at her. I wanted to say, "Look here, young lady, did somebody put you up to this or have you been reading a history of the Middle Ages?"

As to whether her questions were silly or not you have my permission to supply your own answer, but they were the very questions that the learned men of England, France, Germany, and Italy debated for upward of half a century. Some of these questions were settled at various great congresses, others were so unsettled by these congresses that wars resulted.

More than once it occurred to me that my infant stated her questions just a bit more clearly than the old scholastic gentlemen who fought over them so long. My answers, I am afraid, were pretty badly fumbled, but it is my recollection that there was no fumbling on the part of the quiz-master. Some of those questions have always impressed me as unprofitable, but other men who gave their lives to learning didn't think so.

Among the ones I remember were: How old is God? Where does He live? How big is He? Is He afraid of the devil? How big are angels? Can you see them? Are they like steam or mist, so that when seeing them you also see through them? (In other words, what space, if any, do they occupy? —which was at one time a much-debated question.)

This course of inquiry, by the way, is precisely the same as that which engaged the energies of the original pessimists and optimists. One school held that God had made the world for human woe in order to lead us to heaven. The other held that there was much material for happiness in this world. The latter belief was set forth in the form of a declaration that has always amused me, because it stated that God had put just as much beauty and happiness into the world as He could "under the circumstances prevailing at the time." Who on earth, I wonder, knows what those circumstances were?

Our second child was a boy, and it is my observation that mental development proceeds much more slowly in the male. The cosmos and its puzzles didn't trouble him very much until he was about seven or eight years old. Then he opened fire with this: "Daddy, why are people?"

"Well," I said, "there has been a lot of argument on that subject for the past five or ten thousand years, and, to tell you the plain truth of the matter, I'm not sure that anybody has ever found out."

"That's funny," he commented. It was evidently quite a surprise to him that I couldn't answer this question. Presently he asked, "Don't you think that's funny, Daddy?" And so I told him that it may be just as well for us to answer this question each in his own way; that if we knew everything life might be much less interesting. That, however, struck him as rather unsatisfactory. Children are looking for

facts, not theories; and the ease with which they discard theory and put their guns back on the original target commands my admiration. The boy closed this interview by remarking that he was going out to play all the afternoon, but that if I found anything definite on the subject he would be glad to hear it at dinner time.

Mr. and Mrs. Crowell with their five children.

On the whole, it seems to me that "Why are people?" is a futile question; but haven't wise men been answering it since the beginning of time? And haven't millions of people directed their lives in accordance with those answers? Dodge as I will, I too have dealt with that question. And so have you. Even to vote it unanswerable is dealing with it. It's quite an armful to hurl at a person, but it isn't silly. On the contrary, it is so fundamental that it quite bowls us over.

Think what it would mean to the human race to have an answer that every one of us would accept! That, I should say, would be quite a neat little achievement.

Children's minds instinctively attack just such tremendous subjects as this. I venture to say that if the adult world could answer finally and definitely the intelligent and clearly stated and important questions asked this year by infants not over five years of age, virtually everything that we are going to teach them during the ensuing twenty years would shrink to pigmy importance. Their questions silly? They show up our ignorance; that's the truth of the matter.

Cathleen, our youngest, is now four years of age. Recently she stopped suddenly in the midst of very active play and dashed up the stairs to ask, "What makes me run?" A gesture that accompanied this question indicated its depth and scope—she patted her breast with her right hand—she was using "run" in the same sense that we speak of a clock "running."

And so we knew that that little mite of humanity had just discovered anatomy. But note the fact that she didn't ask how many bones there are in the human body; children don't bother much with superficial matter. What she wanted was the most fundamental information of all: Why does the human machine run? If that is a silly question, then I'm ready to reserve a room in the nearest home for the feeble-minded, because I'd like to be able to answer that question. Fortunately for my parental dignity and prestige she didn't pin me down, but hastened on with two easier inquiries: Why do people have noses? And why do they have ears? I handled those fairly well, and for the moment escaped the first, but she'll probably come back to it some day. They usually do.

CHILDREN'S inquiries disclose a general trend of thought at remarkably early ages. For instance, Mary Elizabeth, our eldest, was keenly interested in God and angels and heaven, while Cathleen, the youngest, is more concerned about the reasons for activities that come under her own observation. She wants to know why the stars shine, and recently, after our dog had been killed, she asked, "What *is* dead?" Up to that time the word had no meaning to her.

All the children I have ever talked with take immortality for granted, and quite generously confer it upon animals, and toys also. If you think that is silly, you've forgotten your ancient history and your Bible.

The most certain inquiry of all is, "Where

did I come from ? " Mrs. Crowell and I have read much learned discussion of that question and how to answer it. But we have never made up our minds, so we just play with it. When Cathleen demanded an answer to this inquiry, her mother said, " When you were a little, teeny, tiny baby, you were sitting on the edge of a pink cloud one day, and Daddy and I saw you. So we said, ' There is a lovely baby. Let's have that baby for ours.' " At this point Cathleen interrupted to ask, " Who put me up on that cloud ? Did Daddy put me up on that cloud ? "

I think children have an instinctive knowledge that they never were very far from their parents, and that it doesn't make a great deal of difference how the question is answered. We try to make the answer as entertaining as possible, always laying heavy emphasis on our delight in obtaining such a lovely baby. My guess is that they don't believe any of the stories, anyway, but appreciate a good one.

Pleasant and diverting fiction seems frequently a necessity of life. Among the things I no longer worry about is the fantastic danger of misleading a bright child to any great extent. When I was a child I was easily misled, but children are amazingly brighter-witted nowadays. Cathleen gave me a good and lasting lesson on that subject when she was only three years of age. The two of us were left alone in the house all day, and towards noon Cathleen came into my study to ask me, rather anxiously, if I could cook. She was beginning to feel hungry.

" Certainly I can cook," I said. " I'm one of the best cooks in the world. You come along with me and I'll show you the best cooking you ever saw. Do you like soup ? "

While this boasting was more or less reassuring, Cathleen had never seen me cook and was not entirely convinced, so she answered very cannily that she did like soup. Whatever I thought I could cook she was prepared to like, the main thing being to get some food. Together we entered the kitchen. Mrs. Crowell had left a big pot of soup on the range, and it was now ready to serve.

" Here's the way I make soup," I said. " Now, watch me carefully." With this announcement, I gave my best imitation of a magician's gestures, also his hocus-pocus incantations, directing both towards the pot of soup. Then I lifted the lid with a flourish and exhibited the savoury results of all this tomfoolery.

Cathleen's eyes looked like saucers. She was thrilled, and charmed. Her lunch that day was three bowls of soup, more than she had ever eaten before in her life. Between spoonfuls she chattered like a magpie, evidently accepting my magic performance as entirely authentic. I was amused—and at the same time uncertain about whether I should have furnished that entertainment. What might be the effect, I meditated, of witnessing black art at the age of three ?

Well, the question was soon answered. That evening Cathleen filled a little china teapot, not much bigger than a thimble, with milk, and, after imitating my gestures and incantation, exhibited the results. In other words, I had given her a good show, and she liked it. But I hadn't fooled her for a second.

IN the same way that we just played with the question, " Where did I come from ? " we have also played with Santa Claus. He is real and exciting and gives vast pleasure—and at the same time he is fiction. Beginning a month before Christmas, we talk about him a great deal, but not too seriously, and always with obvious inconsistencies. If we are called upon to explain these we do it with still more inconsistencies. There is so much will for happiness in the normal child that apparently they can enter into the spirit of all this pleasant foolishness with tremendous zest, and still reserve their intelligent doubts. We experimented with " letting it go at that," and it went very well.

Children not only enjoy fiction but they produce it. Whenever I am called upon as audience, I listen with eager attention, and from time to time throw out a hint that may furnish the artist with a few more paragraphs. From three to five is the age for active production, and Cathleen is just now at her prolific best. Her imaginary playmates used to be Betty and Boy ; later they were Alan and Kit Carson. Recently I haven't heard much of Kit—a new one seems to have taken his place. He is a cowboy and his name is Basin. Along with Basin she has acquired a motor and is having quite a bit of trouble with it. She has been arrested for speeding ; for not having a licence, and a ferryboat sank with her and the car. I expressed astonishment that she should have survived such a disaster, but she explained that " the men got out and straightened the boat up."

While Mary Elizabeth meditated religious problems and Cathleen attacked the physical sciences, Madeline was concerned primarily with the business of being a woman. She listened with eager attention one evening to a dinner-table discussion of the public schools and their methods, then remarked,

"There are a lot of things that they don't teach. They don't tell you anything about how to get married. You have to answer some questions when you get married. I've been going to school now nearly a year and I don't even know what those questions are."

Madeline finds history very entertaining, and has one infallible test for kings, statesmen, generals, and admirals. If they were good to their wives and children they were all right, otherwise N. G. If the queens were good to children, they were successful queens. What they did to their husbands—if anything—doesn't seem to interest her at all. It is customary to have them, but they are utterly lacking in romance. At the age of five she unblushingly issued a bulletin approving polyandry. It seemed to her, she said, that most young married couples had trouble about money, so she thought she'd marry five or six men at first in order to avoid difficulties. Later she would weed them out, retaining just one, and didn't I think this was the best plan?

I have promised Madeline that none of her babies shall lack food, that I will lay aside a special fund for them, and this assurance greatly brightened her life. I considered her anxiety far from silly, because people often discussed the cost of living—and there was Madeline planning to purchase eight babies just as soon as she had obtained a quota of husbands adequate to support them.

"Here's the way I make soup," I said. "Now, watch me carefully."

SPEAKING of babies reminds me of Chester, Junior, and the stork. He came stamping in one day very indignant, and exhibited a picture of a stork carrying a baby.

"That," he declared, "is very dangerous."

"What makes you think so?" I asked.

"Why, that bird might drop the baby. What a crazy way to deliver babies!"

"Wait a minute," I protested. "Do you know anything about how many methods of delivery were tried before the storks got the job?"

"No."

"Do you know anything about the strength of a stork's bill?"

"No."

"Did you ever see any babies that the storks had dropped?"

"No."

"Did you ever hear of a stork dropping one?"

"No. Did you?"

"No, son. I never have."

"Well, Daddy, it doesn't look safe."

"All the same, it's safer than an aeroplane. They fall down sometimes, and I never heard of a bird falling. For all you know, storks may be the safest baby carriers in the world."

My intention was to deliver a lecture against jumping to conclusions in the absence of facts, but the visible result was sudden enthusiasm for books about birds and animals. He forgot all about storks and babies in the joy of discovering a new world. Lions, tigers, and elephants romped into his life. He has now read about a wheelbarrow load of such volumes.

Some of the most delightfully amusing questions arise from the children's adventures among books. Encountering a great deal that is not within their own experience they quite naturally misunderstand part of it. However, the first and hardest and most unpleasant lesson they have to learn is that printing machinery is absolutely impartial, that it will reproduce one man's opinion just as readily as another's. To a child, it seems that a type-setting machine ought to be a truth detector. But many grown persons have the same idea. If it isn't the truth, they ask, how did it get printed?

Children are also prone to attribute to certain words meanings suggested by their sounds; the results are often hilariously funny. But grown people do the same thing. For instance, Coleridge, the poet, wrote "the loud bassoon." It isn't loud, but its name suggests that it ought to be. Another great poet listed porphyry among the choicest of precious stones. Quite wrongly, of course, but the word "porphyry" certainly has a most luxurious sound.

Children often misunderstand the words of songs. The most delightful as well as typical example that has come to my attention was furnished by little David Reeves. The Reeves children and ours often play together. Little David looks like an angel and likes music. One day, after singing a familiar tune, he remarked that it was too bad the words of the song had no sense. This naturally led to inquiry. His version of the song follows:—

*Way down upon the S'wanee River,*
*Far, far, away,*
*There's where my heart is turning yellow;*
*There's where the old fox stays.*

Another of David's classics is:—

*Jesus loves me, this I know*
*Because the barber told me so.*

ONE of the most amazing things about babies is their ability to understand each other's baby talk long before it is intelligible to their parents. They can dispute over territorial rights in a sand pit and finally reach an agreement by compromise when less than two years of age. They can trade toys, and discuss what is fair or unfair, in the game they are playing. They can agree to within a few seconds on the amount of time that should be granted by one to the other in connection with the loan of a toy or the performance of some operation incident to their play. The older children who can speak clearly also understand the baby talk of the younger ones, and can communicate with them.

I recall an amusing instance of this: The baby of the family was then about eighteen months of age. Each morning this youngster would manage—how, we didn't know—to get on my bed. For a time the little rascal would sit on a pillow patiently watching me while I slept. It seemed an almost incredible gesture of devotion, and incredible it turned out to be. At that time it was my custom to have a noisy, rowdy romp with the elder children in my bedroom every morning just as soon as I awoke. However, if they were not on hand at the moment, I did not wait or summon them. This fact, it seems, had been the subject of a nursery conference. The whole situation had been explained to the eighteen-months-old baby, and the youngster had been entrusted with the duty of watching me and summoning the clan just as soon as I opened an eye. That task was performed conscientiously, I can testify without qualification. I am sorry I didn't ask what wage was paid the watchman. You may be sure there was one—not money, of course, but something of value.

Children have to do a great deal of exploring to find out why things are as they are.

Every one of the children has asked me what makes the stickers grow on a man's chin. I don't believe I have ever met a child who wouldn't willingly pay admission to be present when his father shaves. The fact that my hair is curly also inspires inquiry, not to say uneasiness, because they observe

that it isn't the rule. Ted asked one morning: "What makes your hair so crooked?"

"I don't know," I replied. He came nearer and grew confidential.

"I'll tell you what you could do," he said. "I put water on mine. That'll straighten it out."

THE fact that I like to hear children talk, and especially enjoy their questions, has won for me, among our flock, an appalling reputation for vast information, but one day I took savage and vengeful delight in it. Children soon learn from experience that the vast majority of people are annoyed by their questions, and Mary Elizabeth, whose social sense is very keen, asserts her seniority when the children are away from home by seeing that they ask none.

One day when they were visiting, Chester, Junior, suddenly realized with alarm that he had lost track of the month of September, and along with it his birthday. He could name the months of the year up to August, and then he got stuck. In a panic he appealed to all present to know what month comes after August. Mary Elizabeth dashed to the rescue, not of Chester but of etiquette, and addressed him as follows:—

"Don't embarrass people by asking questions. Wait until we get home. Daddy will know."

A friend of mine, a physician who specializes on children and has practised for twenty-five years, said to me recently that his observations lead him to believe that very young children are much brighter nowadays than they were a quarter of a century ago. And I believe they are. It also seems to me that they are happier, and have a more wholesome outlook on life than they had twenty-five or thirty years ago, when I was a kid. And why shouldn't this be true? Was there ever, in all the history of the world, a quarter of a century during which more thought was given to the welfare and happiness of children? They can pick up by accident now more information in their first five years than Abraham Lincoln had within reach during his first eighteen.

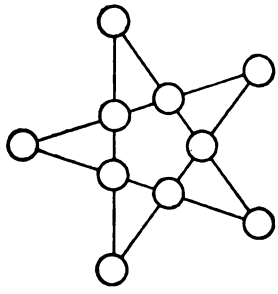
But what I started out to say is that you can have a really good time associating with these busy, cheerful little truth-seekers—that is, if you will think twice before voting any of their questions silly.

# PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

### 782.—A PRIME STAR.

READERS are familiar with this numerical star in which ten different numbers are to be inserted in the ten circles so that every line of four numbers adds up alike. In fact, I have dealt with the case of stars of 5, 6, 7, and 8 points respectively. I received from the late Mr. Ernest Bergholt, the well-known bridge expert, this interesting little variation. It is required that all ten numbers shall be prime numbers and that all the five lines of four shall add up alike to the lowest number possible.

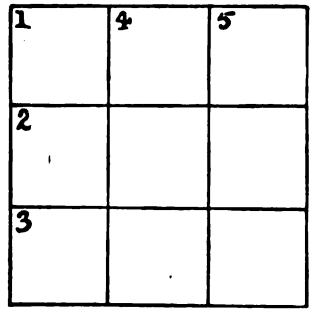


### 783.—THE FAMILY AGES.

A MAN and his wife had three children, John, Ben, and Mary, and the difference between their parents' ages was the same as between John and Ben and between Ben and Mary. The ages of John and Ben multiplied together equalled the age of the father, and the ages of Ben and Mary multiplied together equalled the age of the mother. The combined ages of the family amounted to 90 years. What was the age of each person?

### 784.—A TINY CROSS-WORD PUZZLE.

HERE is a curious little cross-word puzzle, based on an example that was recently shown to me by a friend




There are no blocked-out squares and the definitions are as follows: ACROSS: 1. A Gift. 2. A Point 3. A Tilt. DOWN: 1. Plants. 4. Organs. 5. Pulse

If the reader succeeds in solving this he will, I think, find it amusing.

### 785.—THE SHORTENED WORD CHAIN.

In Perplexity No. 570 (September-October, 1921) I proposed to form a chain of words so that all the capital letters, except the first and last, should serve a double purpose, the last letter of one word forming the first of the next throughout, and the answer I gave was as follows :—

QuakeresSlaVieWaXanthosiAraBoraciCoDandrufFac EgGoldfincHadJailoRadiInKeeLoaMaNOrmolUPeaTo paZanY.

It will be seen that in all I used as many as sixty-nine extra small letters.

I now propose to form such a chain using as few extra letters as possible. What is the most economical solution that you can find ?

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## Puzzles With the Christmas Dessert—Solutions.

### TWENTY QUESTIONS.

There are various ways of solving this puzzle, but the simplest is, I think, the following. Suppose the six-figure number to be 843712. (1) If you divide it by 2, is there any remainder ? No. (2) If you divide the quotient by 2, is there any remainder ? No. (3) If you divide again by 2, is there any remainder ? No. Your twenty questions will be all the same, and writing from right to left, you put down a nought for the answer "No," and 1 for the answer "Yes." The result will be that after the twentieth question you will get 11001101111111000000. This is 843712 written in the binary scale. Dropping the final 0 in the units place, the first 1 is the sixth figure backwards. Add together the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 18th, and 19th powers of 2 and you will get 843712 in our denary scale. If the number is a low one like 100000, seventeen questions would be sufficient if only you knew that the 0 had been reached in the quotient, but the three final questions will merely add three noughts to the left of your binary number. But to prevent quibbles as to infinities, etc., it is best to state before beginning your questions that nought divided by 2 is understood to mean nought with no remainder.

### CUPID'S ARITHMETIC.

All the young mathematician had to do was to reverse the paper and hold it up to the light, or hold it in front of a mirror, when he would immediately see that his betrothed's curious jumble of figures will read, "Kiss me, dearest."

### A GAME WITH MATCHES.

The first player should always win if he first takes either the single match, or one from the three, or one from the five heap, and if he makes any other lead his opponent can win the game. So with a novice it is 5 to 1 against his starting correctly. I regret that I have no room to give all the play, but if you at any time leave (1. 2. 3.) or (1. 1. 1.) or (1. 2. 3. and an equal pair) or (1. 4. 5. and an equal pair) or (any two different pairs, like 1. 1. 2. 2.) then you have a won game, if you play correctly.

### AGE PUZZLE.

The ages of the nine children were respectively 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, and the age of the father was 48.

### COUNTING THE TRIANGLES.

There are various ways of making the count and the answer is 35.

### A MUSICAL PUZZLE.

The curious scoring is nothing more than the melody, "God Save the King."

### WORD STAIRS.

The following is one of the correct solutions. It can be written in the Stairway manner. VESPER, PERSON, SONNET, NETHER, HERBAL BALDER, DERMAL, MALLET, LETHAL, HALVES, VESPER.

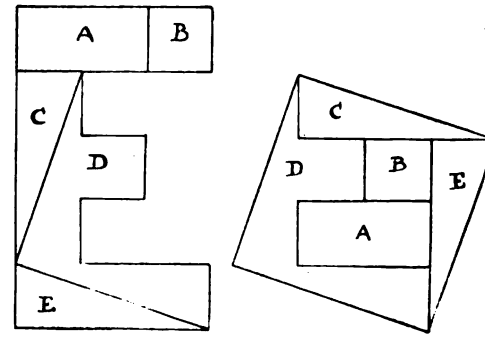
### THREE MOTOR-CARS.

B. would pass C. in 6⅔ minutes. I am sorry I have no space to give my readers the method of solution.

### AN ENIGMA.

The word is WHOLE—SOME.

### DISSECTING THE LETTER E.




The illustration shows how to cut the letter into five pieces that will fit together to form a perfect square.

### A CHARADE.

The word is CAM—BRIDGE.

### A CHAIN PUZZLE.

To open a link and join it again will cost 3d. By opening one link at the end of each of the thirteen pieces the cost will be 3s. 3d., so it would be cheaper than that to buy a new chain. If there happened to be a piece of twelve links, all these twelve could be opened to join the remaining twelve pieces at a cost also of 3s. If there had happened to be two pieces together containing eleven links, all these could be opened to join the remaining eleven pieces at a cost of 2s. 9d. The best that can be done is to open three pieces containing together ten links to join the remaining ten pieces at a cost of 2s. 6d. This is possible if we break up the piece of four links and two pieces of three links, but we must include the piece of three links that was shown in the middle row as one of the three link pieces in order to get altogether five large links and five small ones. If we had been able to find four pieces containing together nine links we should save another 3d., but this is not possible, nor can we find five pieces containing together eight links, and so on, therefore the correct answer is as stated, 2s. 6d.

# THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

## Contents for February, 1926.

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Frontispiece: Bobbie was irresistibly reminded of a picture she had seen in her childhood of alligators fighting in the River Hoogly. She raised the pole, and, with the best intentions, prodded at the tangled mass.


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| MR. POTTER TAKES A REST CURE ... ... ... Illustrations by Charles Crombie. | P. G. WODEHOUSE ... ... | 107 |
| THE DOWN-AND-OUTER ... ... ... ... ... Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas. | GERALD VILLIERS STUART ... | 119 |
| HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE HAREM AND HOW I BECAME A DRESSMAKER ... ... ... ... Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs. | Told by MELEK HANOUM ... | 129 |
| ACROSTICS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | ... ... ... ... ... ... | 138 |
| THE LAND OF MIST; or, The Quest of Edward Malone... Part VIII. Illustrations by F. E. Hiley. | A. CONAN DOYLE... ... ... | 139 |
| BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS! ... ... ... ... Illustrations by E. F. Sherie. | F. G. L. FAIRLIE ... ... ... | 150 |
| TOUCH AND GO ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrations by H. Forster. | "SAPPER" ... ... ... ... | 157 |
| "ZEEBRUGGE"—THE FULL STORY OF A WONDER-FILM TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME ... ... Illustrations from Photographs. | FENN SHERIE ... ... ... | 166 |
| MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS, AND MADELON. No. 10.—Christian the Concierge. Illustrations by S. Abbey. | E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM ... | 174 |
| A TRIAL RUN ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrations by L. G. Illingworth. | ROLAND PERTWEE ... ... | 185 |
| THE HUMORIST—AN EXPOSURE ... ... ... Illustrations from Drawings by the Author. | H. M. BATEMAN ... ... ... | 196 |
| THE ROOM ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I. | STACY AUMONIER ... ... | 200 |
| PERPLEXITIES ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | HENRY E. DUDENEY ... ... | 208 |


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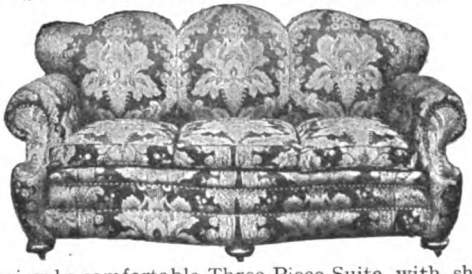

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*To face back of Frontispiece.*

The STRAND MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY, 1926.

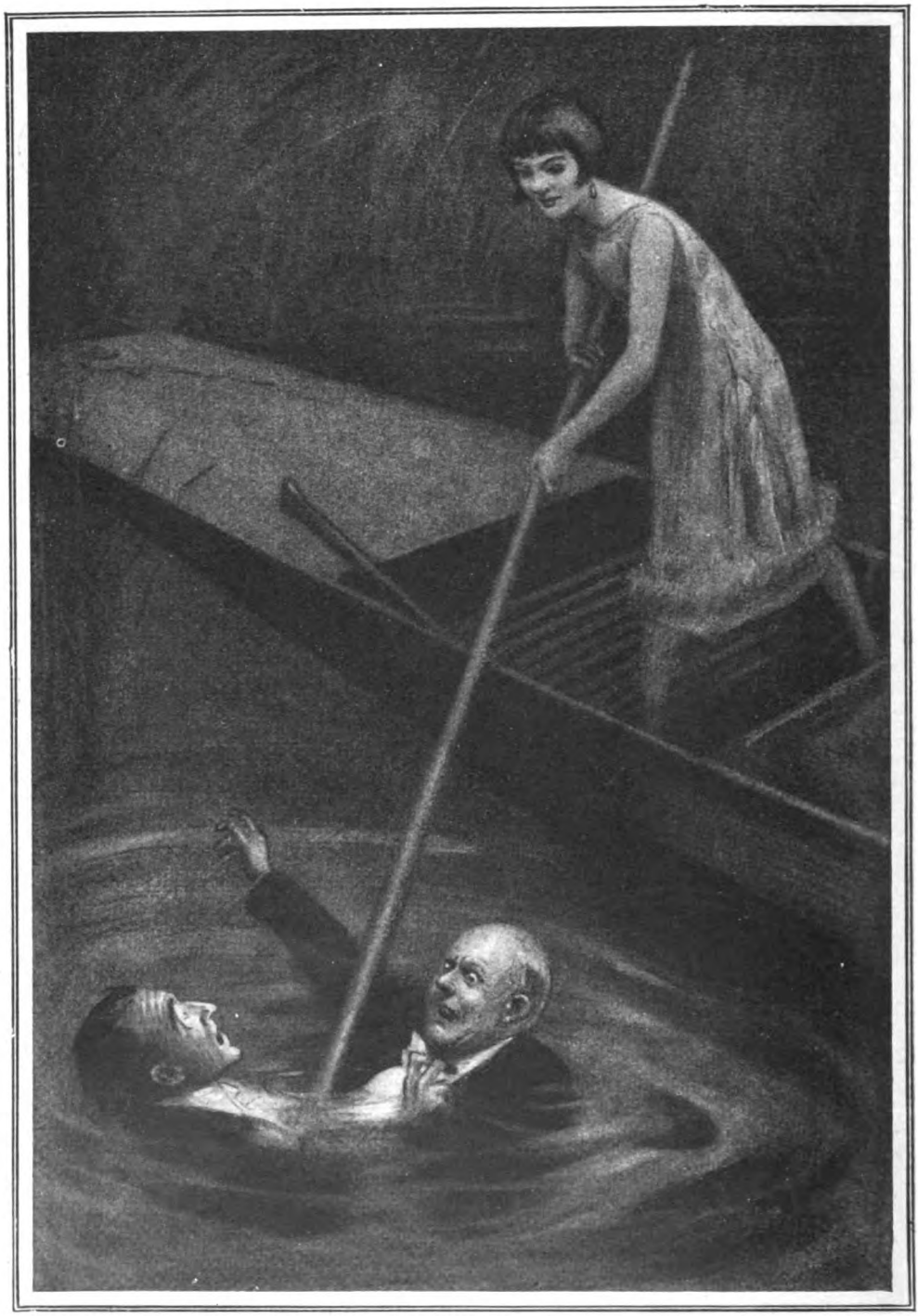
*Next Month:*

**BED CASES**

. . . A new . . .
Night Watchman story

*BY*

**W. W. JACOBS**



BOBBIE WAS IRRESISTIBLY REMINDED OF A PICTURE SHE HAD SEEN IN HER CHILDHOOD OF ALLIGATORS FIGHTING IN THE RIVER HOOGLY. SHE RAISED THE POLE, AND, WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS, PRODDED AT THE TANGLED MASS.

*(See page 111.)*

# Mr. Potter Takes a Rest Cure

By

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

*ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE*

MR. JOHN HAMILTON POTTER, founder and proprietor of the well-known New York publishing house of J. H. Potter, Inc., laid down the typescript which had been engaging his leisurely attention, and from the depths of his basket-chair gazed dreamily across the green lawns and gleaming flowerbeds to where Skeldings Hall basked in the pleasant June sunshine. He was feeling quietly happy. The waters of the moat glittered like liquid silver; a gentle breeze brought to his nostrils the scent of newly-cut grass; the doves in the immemorial elms cooed with precisely the right gentlemanly intonation; and he had not seen Clifford Gandle since luncheon. God, it seemed to Mr. Potter, was in his heaven and all was right with the world.

And how near, he reflected, he had come to missing all this delightful old-world peace. When, shortly after his arrival in England, he had met Lady Wickham at a Pen and Ink Club dinner and she had invited him to pay a visit to Skeldings, his first impulse had been to decline. His hostess was a woman of rather markedly overwhelming personality; and, inasmuch as he had only recently recovered from a nervous breakdown and had been ordered by his doctor complete rest and tranquillity, it had seemed to him that at close range and over an extended period of time she might be a little too much for the old system. Furthermore, she wrote novels: and that instinct of self-preservation which lurks in every publisher had suggested to him that behind her invitation lay a sinister desire to read these to him one by one with a view to getting him to produce them in America. Only the fact that he was a lover of the old and picturesque, coupled with the fact that Skeldings Hall dated back to the time of the Tudors, had caused him to accept.

Not once, however—not even when Clifford Gandle was expressing to him with a politician's trained verbosity his views on Unemployment and other weighty matters—had he regretted his decision. When he looked back on his life of the past eighteen months—a life spent in an inferno of shrilling telephones and authors, many of them female, popping in to abuse him for not advertising their books better—he could almost fancy that he had been translated to Paradise.

A Paradise, moreover, which was not without its Peri. For at this moment there approached Mr. Potter across the lawn, walking springily as if she were constructed of whalebone and indiarubber, a girl. She was a boyish-looking girl, slim and graceful, and the red hair on her bare head glowed pleasingly in the sun.

"Hullo, Mr. Potter!" she said.

The publisher beamed upon her. This was Roberta Wickham, his hostess's daughter, who had returned to her ancestral home two days ago from a visit to friends in the North. A friendly young thing, she had appealed to Mr. Potter from the first.

"Well, well, well!" said Mr. Potter.

"Don't get up. What are you reading?" Bobbie Wickham picked up the manuscript. "'Ethics of Suicide,'" she read. "Cheery!"

Mr. Potter laughed indulgently.

"No doubt it seems an odd thing to be reading on such a day and in such surroundings. But a publisher is never free.



Copyright, 1926, by P. G. Wodehouse.

This was sent over for my decision from my New York office. They won't leave me alone, you see, even when I am on vacation."

Bobbie Wickham's hazel eyes clouded pensively.

"There's a lot to be said for suicide," she murmured. "If I had to see much of Clifford Gandle, I'd commit suicide myself."

Mr. Potter started. He had always liked this child, but he had never dreamed that she was such a completely kindred soul.

"Don't you like Mr. Gandle?"

"No."

"Nor do I."

"Nor does anyone," said Bobbie, "except mother." Her eyes clouded again. "Mother thinks he's wonderful."

"She does?"

"Yes."

"Well, well!" said Mr. Potter.

Bobbie brooded.

"He's a member of Parliament, you know."

"Yes."

"And they say he may be in the Cabinet any day."

"So he gave me to understand."

"And all that sort of thing is very bad for a man, don't you think? I mean, it seems to make him so starchy."

"The very word."

"And pompous."

"The exact adjective I would have selected," agreed Mr. Potter. "In our frequent conversations, before you arrived, he addressed me as if I were a half-witted deputation of his constituents."

"Did you see much of him before I came?"

"A great deal, though I did my best to avoid him."

"He's a difficult man to avoid."

"Yes." Mr. Potter chuckled sheepishly. "Shall I tell you something that happened a day or two ago? You must not let it go any farther, of course. I was coming out of the smoking-room one morning and I saw him approaching me along the passage. So—so I jumped back and—ha, ha!—hid in a small cupboard."

"Jolly sensible."

"Yes. But unfortunately he opened the cupboard door and discovered me. It was exceedingly embarrassing."

"What did you say?"

"There was nothing much I could say. I'm afraid he must have thought me cut of my senses."

"Well, I—— All right, mother. Coming."

THE rich contralto of a female novelist calling to its young had broken the stillness of the summer afternoon. Mr. Potter looked up with a start. Lady Wickham was standing on the lawn. It seemed to Mr. Potter that, as his little friend moved towards her, something of the springiness had gone out of her walk. It was as if she moved reluctantly.

"Where have you been, Roberta?" asked Lady Wickham, as her daughter came within earshot of the normal tone of voice. "I have been looking everywhere for you."

"Anything special, mother?"

"Mr. Gandle wants to go to Hertford. He has to get some books. I think you had better drive him in your car."

"Oh, mother!"

Mr. Potter, watching from his chair, observed a peculiar expression flit into Lady Wickham's face. Had he been her English publisher, instead of merely her prospective American publisher, he would have been familiar with that look. It meant that Lady Wickham was preparing to exercise her celebrated will-power.

"Roberta," she said, with dangerous quiet, "I particularly wish you to drive Mr. Gandle to Hertford."

"But I had promised to go over and play tennis at the Crufts'."

"Mr. Gandle is a much better companion for you than a young waster like Algy Crufts. You must run over and tell him that you cannot play to-day."

A few minutes later a natty two-seater drew up at the front door of the Crufts' residence down the road; and Bobbie Wickham, seated at the wheel, gave tongue.

"Algy!"

The flannel-clad form of Mr. Algernon Crufts appeared at a window.

"Hullo! Down in a jiffy."

There was an interval. Then Mr. Crufts joined her on the drive.

"Hullo! I say, you haven't brought your racket, you poor chump," he said.

"Tennis is off," announced Bobbie, briefly. "I've got to drive Clifford Gandle in to Hertford." She paused. "I say, Algy, shall I tell you something?"

"What?"

"Between ourselves."

"Absolutely."

"Mother wants me to marry Clifford Gandle."

Algy Crufts uttered a strangled exclamation. Such was his emotion that he nearly swallowed the first eight inches of his cigarette-holder.

"Marry Clifford Gandle!"

"Yes. She's all for it. She says he would have a steadying influence on me."

"Ghastly! Take my advice and give the project the most absolute go-by. I was up at Oxford with the man. A blighter, if ever there was one. He was President of the Union and all sorts of frightful things."

"It's all very awkward. I don't know what to do."

"Kick him in the eye and tell him to go to blazes. That's the procedure."

"But it's so hard not to do anything mother wants you to do. You know mother."

"I do," said Mr. Crufts, who did.

"Oh, well," said Bobbie, "you never know. There's always the chance that she may take a sudden dislike to him for some reason or other. She does take sudden dislikes to people."

"She does," said Mr. Crufts. Lady Wickham had disliked him at first sight.

"Well, let's hope she will suddenly dislike Clifford Gandle. But I don't mind telling you Algy, that at the moment things are looking pretty black."

"Keep smiling," urged Mr. Crufts.

"What's the good of smiling, you fathead?" said Bobbie, morosely.

"Don't get up. What are you reading?" Bobbie Wickham picked up the manuscript. "'Ethics of Suicide,'" she read. "Cheery!"

Night had fallen on Skeldings Hall. Lady Wickham was in her study, thinking those great thoughts which would subsequently be copyrighted in all languages, including the Scandinavian. Bobbie was strolling somewhere in the grounds, having eluded Mr. Gandle after dinner. And Mr. Gandle, baffled but not defeated, had donned a light overcoat and gone out to try to find Bobbie.

As for Mr. Potter, he was luxuriating in restful solitude in a punt under a willow by the bank of the moat.

From the first moment he had set eyes on it, Hamilton Potter had loved the moat at Skeldings Hall. Here, by the willow, it broadened out almost into the dimensions of a lake; and there was in the glitter of stars on its surface and the sleepy rustling of birds in the trees along its bank something infinitely soothing. The healing darkness wrapped the publisher about like a blanket; the cool night-wind fanned caressingly a forehead a little heated by Lady Wickham's fine old port; and gradually, lulled by the beauty of the scene, Mr. Potter allowed himself to float into one of those reveries which come to publishers at moments such as this.

He mused on "jackets" and remainders and modes of distribution; on royalties and advertisements and spring lists and booksellers' discounts. And his random thoughts, like fleeting thistledown, had just drifted to the question of the growing price of pulp-paper, when from somewhere near by there came the sound of a voice, jerking him back to the world again.

"Oh, let the solid ground not fail beneath my feet before that I have found what some have found so sweet," said the voice.

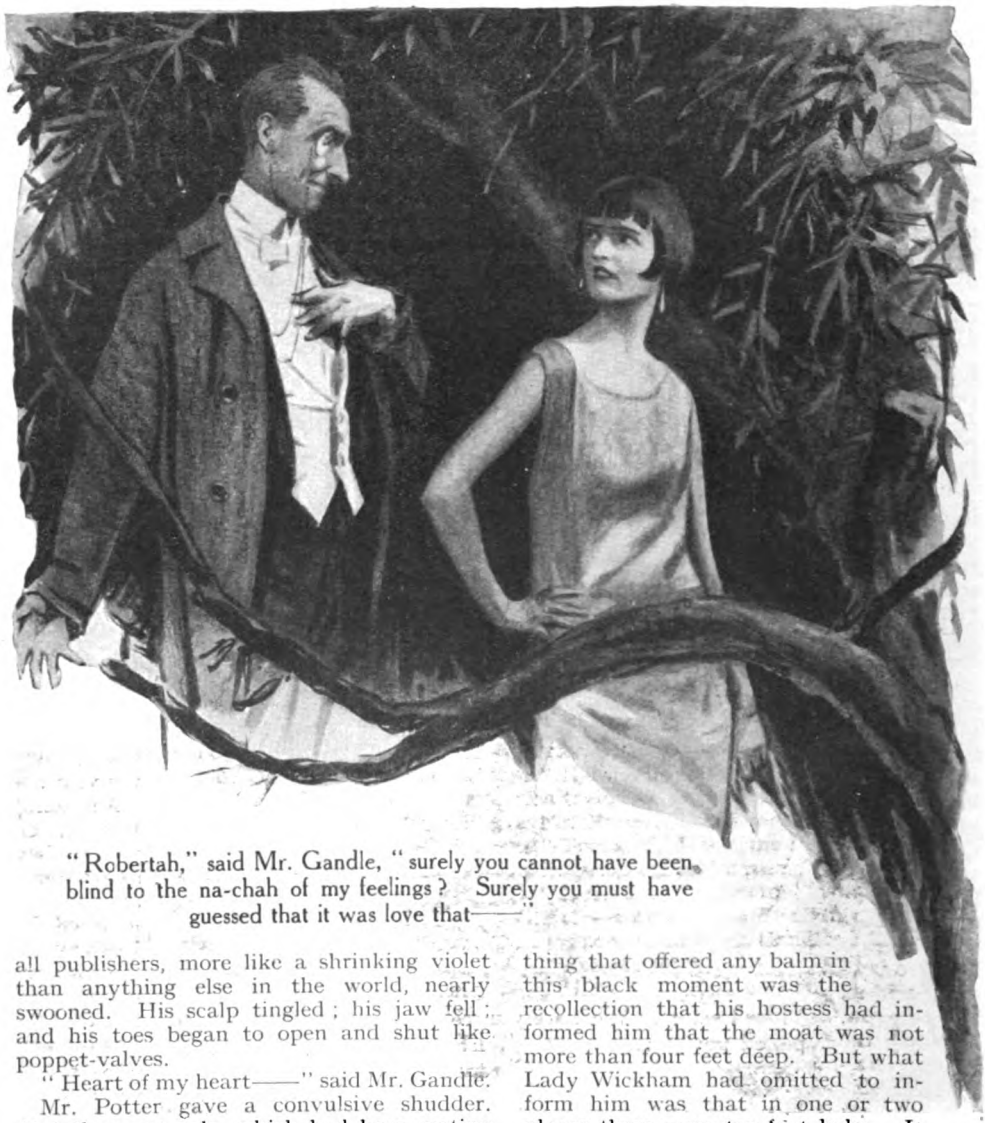
A moderate request, one would have supposed; and yet it irritated Mr. Potter like the bite of a mosquito. For the voice was the voice of Clifford Gandle.

"Robertah," proceeded the voice, and Mr. Potter breathed again. He had taken it for granted that the man had perceived and was addressing himself. He gathered now that his presence had not been discovered.

"Robertah," said Mr. Gandle, "surely you cannot have been blind to the na-chah of my feelings? Surely you must have guessed that it was love that——"

Hamilton Potter congealed into a solid mass of frozen horror. He was listening-in on a proposal of marriage.

The emotions of any delicate-minded man who finds himself in such a position cannot fail to be uncomfortable; and the greater his delicacy of mind the more acute must the discomfort be. Mr. Potter, being as are



"Robertah," said Mr. Gandle, "surely you cannot have been blind to the na-chah of my feelings? Surely you must have guessed that it was love that——"

all publishers, more like a shrinking violet than anything else in the world, nearly swooned. His scalp tingled; his jaw fell; and his toes began to open and shut like poppet-valves.

"Heart of my heart——" said Mr. Gandle.

Mr. Potter gave a convulsive shudder. And the punt-pole, which had been resting on the edge of the boat, clattered down with a noise like a machine-gun.

There was a throbbing silence. Then Mr. Gandle spoke sharply. "Is anybody they-ah?"

There are situations in which a publisher can do only one thing. Raising himself noiselessly, Mr. Potter wriggled to the side of the punt and lowered himself into the water.

"Who is they-ah?"

Mr. Potter with a strong effort shut his mouth, which was trying to emit a howl of anguish. He had never supposed that water could be so cold. Silently he waded out towards the opposite bank. The only thing that offered any balm in this black moment was the recollection that his hostess had informed him that the moat was not more than four feet deep. But what Lady Wickham had omitted to inform him was that in one or two places there were ten-foot holes. It came, therefore, as a surprise to Mr. Potter when, after he had travelled some six yards, there happened to him that precise disaster which Mr. Gandle, in his recent remarks, had expressed himself as so desirous of avoiding. As the publisher took his next step forward, the solid ground failed beneath his feet.

"Oosh!" ejaculated Mr. Potter.

Clifford Gandle was a man of swift intuition. Hearing the cry and becoming aware at the same time of loud splashing noises, he guessed in one masterly flash of inductive reasoning that someone had fallen in. He charged down the bank and

perceived the punt. He got into the punt. Bobbie Wickham got into the punt. Mr. Gandle seized the pole and propelled the punt out into the waste of waters.

"Are you they-ah?" inquired Mr. Gandle.

"Glub!" exclaimed Mr. Potter.

"I see him," said Bobbie. "More to the left."

Clifford Gandle drove the rescuing craft more to the left, and was just digging the pole into the water when Mr. Potter, coming up for the third time, found it within his reach. The partiality of drowning men for straws is proverbial; but, as a class, they are broad-minded and will clutch at punt-poles with equal readiness. Mr. Potter seized the pole and pulled strongly; and Clifford Gandle, who happened to be leaning his whole weight on it at the moment, was not proof against what practically amounted to a formal invitation. A moment later he had joined Mr. Potter in the depths.

Bobbie Wickham rescued the punt-pole, which was floating away on the tide, and peered down through the darkness. Stirring things were happening below. Clifford Gandle had grasped Mr. Potter. Mr. Potter had grasped Clifford Gandle. And Bobbie, watching from above, was irresistibly reminded of a picture she had seen in her childhood of alligators fighting in the River Hoogly. She raised the pole, and, with the best intentions, prodded at the tangled mass.

The treatment proved effective. The pole, taking Clifford Gandle shrewdly in the stomach, caused him to release his grip on Mr. Potter; and Mr. Potter, suddenly discovering that he was in shallow water again, did not hesitate. By the time Clifford Gandle had scrambled into the punt he was on dry land, squelching rapidly towards the house.

A silence followed his departure. Then

**Hamilton Potter congealed into a solid mass of frozen horror. He was listening-in on a proposal of marriage.**

Mr. Gandle, expelling the last pint of water from his mouth, gave judgment.

"The man must be mad!"

He found some more water which he had overlooked, and replaced it.

"Stark, staring mad!" he repeated. "He must have deliberately flung himself in."

Bobbie Wickham was gazing out into the night; and, had the visibility been better, her companion might have observed in her expression the raptness of inspiration.

"There is no other explanation. The punt was they-ah, by the bank, and he was hee-yah, right out in the middle of the moat. I've suspected for days that he was unbalanced. Once I found him hiding in a cupboard. Crouching there with a wild gleam in his eyes. And that brooding look of his. That strange brooding look. I've noticed it every time I've been talking to him."

Bobbie broke the silence, speaking in a low, grave voice.

"Didn't you know about poor Mr. Potter?"

"Eh?"

"That he has suicidal mania?"

Clifford Gandle drew in his breath sharply.

"You can't blame him," said Bobbie. "How would you feel if you came home one day and found your wife and your two brothers and a cousin sitting round the dinner table stone-dead?"

"What?"

"Poisoned. Something in the curry." She shivered. "This morning I found him in the garden gloating over a book called 'Ethics of Suicide.'"

Clifford Gandle ran his fingers through his dripping hair.

"Something ought to be done!"

"What can you do? The thing isn't supposed to be known. If you mention it to him, he will simply go away; and then mother will be furious, because she wants him to publish her books in America."

"I shall keep the closest watch on the man."

"Yes, that's the thing to do," agreed Bobbie.

She pushed the punt to the shore. Mr. Gandle, who had begun to feel chilly, leaped out and sped to the house to change his clothes. Bobbie, following at a more leisurely pace, found her mother standing in the passage outside her study. Lady Wickham's manner was perturbed.

"Roberta!"

"Yes, mother?"

"What in the world has been happening? A few moments ago Mr. Potter ran past my door, dripping wet. And now Clifford Gandle has just gone by, also soaked to the skin. What have they been doing?"

"Fighting in the moat, mother."

"Fighting in the moat? What do you mean?"

"Mr. Potter jumped in to try and get away from Mr. Gandle, and then Mr. Gandle went in after him and seized him round the neck, and they grappled together for quite a long time, struggling furiously. I think they must have had a quarrel."

"What on earth would they quarrel about?"

"Well, you know what a violent man Clifford Gandle is." This was an aspect of Mr. Gandle's character which Lady Wickham had not perceived. She opened her penetrating eyes.

"Clifford Gandle violent?"

"I think he's the sort of man who takes sudden dislikes to people."

"Nonsense!"

"Well, it all seems very queer to me," said Bobbie. She passed on her way upstairs; and, reaching the first landing, turned down the corridor till she came to the principal guest-room. She knocked delicately. There were movements inside, and presently the door opened, revealing Hamilton Potter in a flowered dressing-gown.

"Thank Heaven you're safe!" said Bobbie.

The fervour of her tone touched Mr. Potter. His heart warmed to the child.

"If I hadn't been there when Mr. Gandle was trying to drown you——"

Mr. Potter started violently.

"Trying to drown me?" he gasped.

Bobbie's eyebrows rose.

"Hasn't anybody told you about Mr. Gandle—warned you? Didn't you know he was one of the mad Gandles?"

"The—the——?"

"Mad Gandles. You know what some of these very old English families are like. All the Gandles have been mad for generations back."

"You don't mean—you can't mean——" Mr. Potter gulped. "You can't mean that Mr. Gandle is homicidal?"

"Not normally. But he takes sudden dislikes to people."

"I think he likes me," said Mr. Potter, with a certain nervous satisfaction. "He has made a point of seeking me out and giving me his views on—er—various matters."

"Did you ever yawn while he was doing it?"

Mr. Potter blenched.

"Would—would he mind that very much?"

"Mind it! You lock your door at night, don't you, Mr. Potter?"

"But this is terrible."

"He sleeps in this corridor."

"But why is the man at large?"

"He hasn't done anything yet. You can't shut a man up till he has done something."

"Does Lady Wickham know of this?"

"For goodness' sake don't say a word to mother. It would only make her nervous. Everything will be quite all right, if you're only careful. You had better try not to let him get you alone."

"Yes," said Mr. Potter. It was an idea that had occurred to him independently.

The last of the mad Gandles, meanwhile, having peeled off the dress-clothes moistened during the recent water-carnival, had draped his bony form in a suit of orange-coloured pyjamas, and was now devoting the full force of a legislator's mind to the situation which had arisen.

He was a long, thin young man with a curved nose which even in his lighter moments gave him the appearance of disapproving things in general; and there had been nothing in the events of the last hour to cause any diminution of this look of disapproval. For we cannot in fairness but admit that, if ever a mad Gandle had good reason to be mad, Clifford Gandle had at this juncture. He had been interrupted at the crucial point of a proposal of marriage. He had been plunged into water and prodded with a punt-pole. He had sown the seeds of a cold in the head. And he rather fancied that he had swallowed a newt. These things do not conduce to sunniness in a man.

Nor did an inspection of the future do anything to remove his gloom. He had come to Skeldings for rest and recuperation after the labours of an exhausting Session, and now it seemed that, instead of passing his time pleasantly in the society of Roberta Wickham, he would be compelled to devote himself to acting as a guardian to a misguided publisher.

It was not as if he liked publishers, either. His relations with Prodder and Wiggs, who had sold forty-three copies of his book of political essays—"Watchman, What of the Night?"—had not been agreeable.

Nevertheless, this last of the Gandles was a conscientious man. He had no intention of shirking the call of duty. The question of whether it was worth while preventing a publisher committing suicide did not present itself to him.

That was why Bobbie's note, when he read it, produced such immediate results.

Exactly when the missive had been delivered, Clifford Gandle could not say. Much thought had rendered him distrait, and the rustle of the paper as it was thrust under his door did not reach his consciousness. It was only when, after a considerable time, he rose with the intention of going to bed that he perceived lying on the floor an envelope.

He stooped and picked it up. He examined it with a thoughtful stare. He opened it.

The letter was brief. It ran as follows:—

"*What about his razors?*"

A thrill of dismay shot through him.

Razors!

He had forgotten them.

Clifford Gandle did not delay. Already it might be that he was too late. He hurried down the passage and tapped at Mr. Potter's door.

"Who's there?"

Clifford Gandle was relieved. He was in time.

"Can I come in?"

"Who is that?"

"Gandle."

"What do you want?"

"Can you—er—lend me a razah?"

"A what!"

"A razah."

There followed a complete silence from within. Mr. Gandle tapped again.

"Are you they-ah?"

THE silence was broken by an odd rumbling sound. Something heavy knocked against the woodwork. But that the explanation seemed so improbable, Mr. Gandle would have said that this peculiar publisher had pushed a chest of drawers against the door.

"Mr. Pottah!"

More silence.

"Are you they-ah, Mr. Pottah?"

Additional stillness. Mr. Gandle, wearying of a profitless vigil, gave the thing up and returned to his room.

The task that lay before him, he now realized, was to wait awhile and then make his way along the balcony which joined the windows of the two rooms; enter while the other slept, and abstract his weapon or weapons.

He looked at his watch. The hour was close on midnight. He decided to give Mr. Potter till two o'clock.

Clifford Gandle sat down to wait.

MR. POTTER'S first action, after the retreating footsteps had told him that his visitor had gone, was to extract a couple of nerve pills from the box by his bed and swallow them. This was a rite which, by the orders of his medical adviser, he had performed thrice a day since leaving America—once half an hour before breakfast, once an hour before luncheon, and again on retiring to rest.

In spite of the fact that he now consumed these pills, it seemed to Mr. Potter that he

could scarcely be described as retiring to rest. After the recent ghastly proof of Clifford Gandle's insane malevolence, he could not bring himself to hope that even the most fitful slumber would come to him this night. The horror of the thought of that awful man padding softly to his door and asking for razors chilled Hamilton Potter to the bone.

Nevertheless, he did his best. He switched off the light and, closing his eyes, began to repeat in a soft undertone a formula which he had often found efficacious.

"Day by day," murmured Mr. Potter, "in every way, I am getting better and better. Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better."

It would have astonished Clifford Gandle, yawning in his room down the corridor, if he could have heard such optimistic sentiments proceeding from those lips.

"Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better."

Mr. Potter's mind performed an unfortunate side-slip. He lay there tingling. Suppose he *was* getting better and better, what of it? What was the use of getting better and better if at any moment a mad Gandle might spring out with a razor and end it all?

He forced his thoughts away from these uncomfortable channels. He clenched his teeth and whispered through them with a touch of defiance.

"Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better. Day by day, in every way——"

A pleasant drowsiness stole over Mr. Potter.

"Day by day, in every way," he murmured, "I am getting better and better. Day by day, in every way, I am betting getter and getter. Bay by day, in every way, I am betting getter and wetter. Way by day——"

Mr. Potter slept.

Over the stables the clock chimed the hour of two, and Clifford Gandle stepped out on to the balcony.

It has been well said by many thinkers that in human affairs you can never be certain that some little trifling obstacle will not undo the best-laid of schemes. It was the sunken road at Hougomont that undid the French cavalry at Waterloo, and it was something very similar that caused Clifford Gandle's plan of action to go wrong now—a jug of water, to wit, which the maid who had brought Mr. Potter's hot-water can before dinner had placed immediately beneath the window.

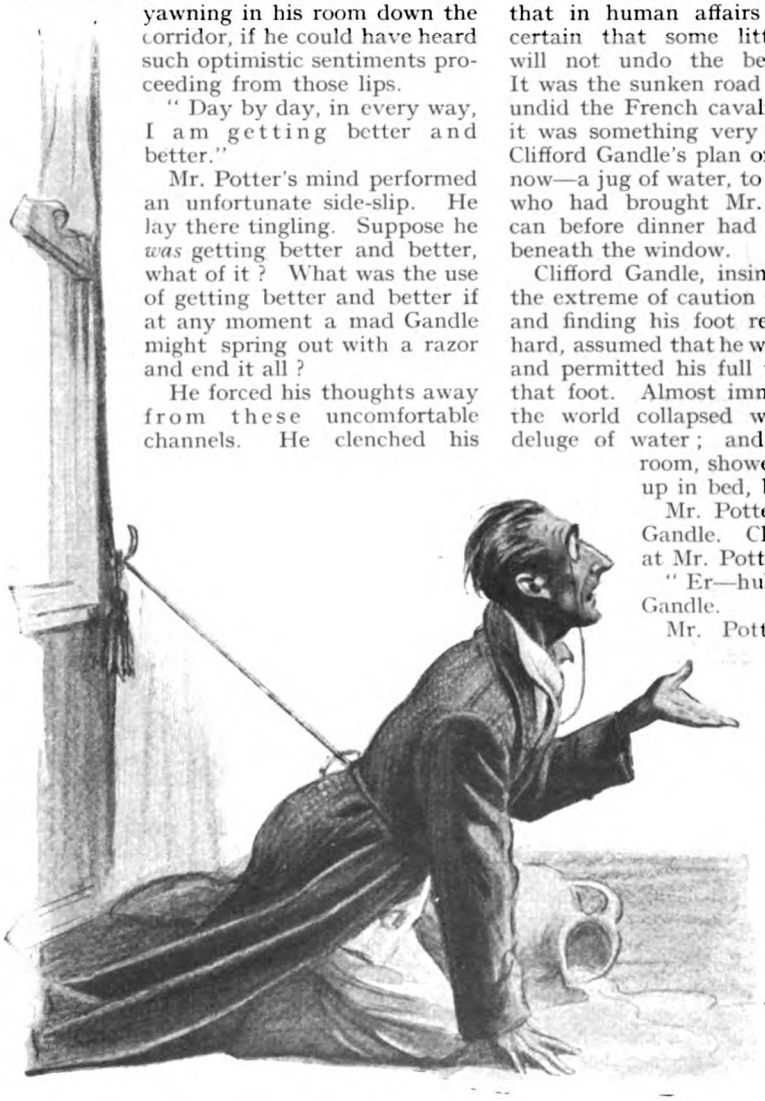
Clifford Gandle, insinuating himself with the extreme of caution through the window and finding his foot resting on something hard, assumed that he was touching the floor, and permitted his full weight to rest upon that foot. Almost immediately afterwards the world collapsed with a crash and a deluge of water; and light, flooding the room, showed Mr. Potter sitting up in bed, blinking.

Mr. Potter stared at Clifford Gandle. Clifford Gandle stared at Mr. Potter.

"Er—hullo!" said Clifford Gandle.

Mr. Potter uttered a low, curious sound like a cat with a fish-bone in its throat.

"I—er—just looked in," said Clifford Gandle.



Mr. Potter stared at Clifford Gandle. Clifford Gandle stared at Mr. Potter. "I—er—just looked in," said Gandle.

Mr. Potter made a noise like a second and slightly larger cat with another fish-bone in its throat.

" I've come for the razah," said Clifford Gandle. "Ah, there it is," he said, and, moving towards the dressing-table, secured it.

Mr. Potter leaped from his bed. He looked about him for a weapon. The only one in sight appeared to be the typescript of " Ethics of Suicide," and that, while it would have made an admirable instrument for swatting flies, was far too flimsy for the present crisis. All in all, it began to look to Mr. Potter like a sticky evening.

" Good night," said Clifford Gandle.

Mr. Potter was amazed to see that his visitor was withdrawing towards the window. It seemed incredible. For a moment he wondered whether Bobbie Wickham had not made some mistake about this man. Nothing could be more temperate than his behaviour at the moment.

And then, as he reached the window, Clifford Gandle smiled, and all Mr. Potter's fears leaped into being again.

The opinion of Clifford Gandle regarding this smile was that it was one of those kindly, reassuring smiles—the sort of smile to put the most nervous melancholiac at his ease. To Mr. Potter it seemed precisely the kind of maniac grin which he would have expected from such a source.

" Good night," said Clifford Gandle.

He smiled again, and was gone. And Mr. Potter, having stood rooted to the spot for some minutes, crossed the floor and closed the window. He then bolted the window. He perceived a pair of shutters, and shut them. He moved the washhand-stand till it rested against the shutters. He placed two chairs and a small bookcase against the washhand-stand. Then he went to bed, leaving the light burning.

" Day by day, in every way," said Mr. Potter, " I am getting better and better."

But his voice lacked the ring of true conviction.

SUNSHINE filtering in through the shutters, and the song of birds busy in the ivy outside his window, woke Mr. Potter at an early hour next morning ; but it was some time before he could bring himself to spring from his bed to greet another day. His disturbed night had left him heavy and lethargic. When finally he had summoned up the energy to rise and remove the zareba in front of the window and open the shutters, he became aware that a glorious morning was upon the world. The samples of sunlight that had crept into the room had indicated only feebly the golden wealth without.

But there was no corresponding sunshine in Mr. Potter's heart. Spiritually as well as physically he was at a low ebb. The more he examined the position of affairs, the less he liked it. He went down to breakfast in pensive mood.

Breakfast at Skeldings was an informal meal, and visitors were expected to take it when they pleased, irrespective of the movements of their hostess, who was a late riser. In the dining-room, when Mr. Potter entered it, only the daughter of the house was present.

Bobbie was reading the morning paper. She nodded cheerfully to him over its top.

" Good morning, Mr. Potter. I hope you slept well." Mr. Potter winced.

" Miss Wickham," he said, " last night an appalling thing occurred."

A startled look came into Bobbie's eyes.

" You don't mean—Mr. Gandle ? "

" Yes."

" Oh, Mr. Potter, what ? "

"Just as I was going to bed, the man knocked at my door and asked if he could borrow my razah—I mean my razor."

"You didn't lend it to him?"

"No, I did not," replied Mr. Potter, with a touch of asperity. "I barricaded the door."

"How wise of you!"

"And at two in the morning he came in through the window!"

"How horrible!"

"He took my razor. Why he did not attack me, I cannot say. But, having obtained it, he grinned at me in a ghastly way and went out."

There was a silence.

"Have an egg or something," said Bobbie, in a hushed voice.

"Thank you, I will take a little ham," whispered Mr. Potter.

There was another silence.

"I'm afraid," said Bobbie at length, "you will have to go."

"That is what I think."

"It is quite evident that Mr. Gandle has taken one of his uncontrollable dislikes to you."

"Yes."

"What I think you ought to do is to leave quite quietly, without saying good-bye or anything, so that he won't know where you've gone and won't be able to follow you. Then you could write mother a letter, saying that you had to go because of Mr. Gandle's persecution."

"Exactly."

"You needn't say anything about his being mad. She knows that. Just say that he ducked you in the moat and then came into your room at two in the morning and made faces at you. She will understand."

"Yes. I—"

"Hush!"

CLIFFORD GANDLE came into the room.

"Good morning," said Bobbie.

"Good morning," said Mr. Gandle.

He helped himself to a poached egg; and, glancing across the table at the publisher, was concerned to note how wan and sombre was his aspect. If ever a man looked as if he were on the verge of putting an end to everything, that man was John Hamilton Potter.

Clifford Gandle was not feeling particularly festive himself at the moment, for he was a man who depended greatly for his well-being on a placid eight hours of sleep; but he exerted himself to be bright and optimistic.

"What a lovely morning!" he trilled.

"Yes," said Mr. Potter.

"Surely such weather is enough to make any man happy and satisfied with life."

"Yes," said Mr. Potter, doubtfully.

"Who, with all Na-chah smiling, could seriously contemplate removing himself from so bright a world?"

"George Philibert, of 32, Acacia Road, Cricklewood, did," said Bobbie, who had resumed her study of the paper.

"Eh?" said Mr. Gandle.

"George Philibert, of 32, Acacia Road, Cricklewood, was had up before the beak yesterday, charged with attempted suicide. He stated that—"

Mr. Gandle cast a reproachful look at her. He had always supposed Roberta Wickham to be a girl of fair intelligence, as women go; and it seemed to him that he had overestimated her good sense. He did his best to cover up her blunder.

"Possibly," he said, "with some really definite and serious reason——"

"I can never understand," said Mr. Potter, coming out of what had all the outward appearance of a trance, "why the idea arose that suicide is wrong."

He spoke with a curious intensity. The author of "Ethics of Suicide" had wielded a plausible pen, and the subject was one on which he now held strong views. And, even if he had not already held them, his mood this morning was of a kind to breed them in his bosom.

"The author of a very interesting book which I intend to publish shortly," he said, "points out that none but the votaries of the monotheistic religions look upon suicide as a crime."

"Yes," said Mr. Gandle, "but—"

"If, he goes on to say, the criminal law forbids suicide, that is not an argument valid in the Church. And, besides, the prohibition is ridiculous, for what penalty can frighten a man who is not afraid of death itself?"

"George Philibert got fourteen days," said Bobbie.

"Yes, but——" said Mr. Gandle.

"The ancients were very far from regarding the matter in the modern light. Indeed, in Massilia and on the island of Ceos, the man who could give valid reasons for relinquishing his life was handed the cup of hemlock by the magistrate, and that, too, in public."

"Yes, but——"

"And why," said Mr. Potter, "suicide should be regarded as cowardly is beyond me. Surely no man who had not an iron nerve——"

He broke off. The last two words had tapped a chord in his memory. Abruptly it occurred to him that here he was, halfway through breakfast, and he had not

taken those iron nerve-pills which his doctor had so strictly ordered him to swallow thirty minutes before the morning meal.

"Yes," said Mr. Gandle. He lowered his cup, and looked across the table. "But——"

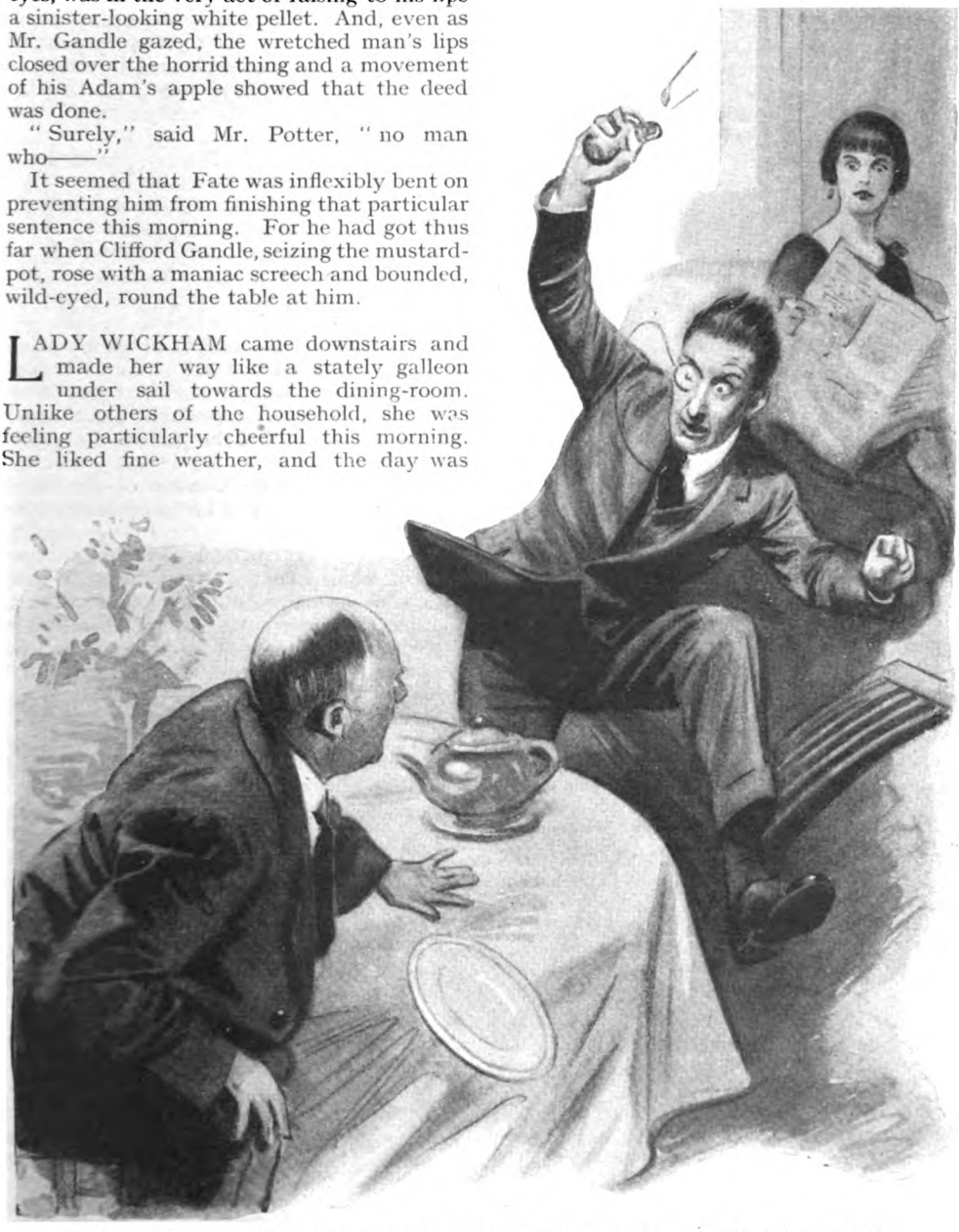
His voice died away. He sat staring before him in horror-struck silence. Mr. Potter, with a strange, wild look in his eyes, was in the very act of raising to his lips a sinister-looking white pellet. And, even as Mr. Gandle gazed, the wretched man's lips closed over the horrid thing and a movement of his Adam's apple showed that the deed was done.

"Surely," said Mr. Potter, "no man who——"

It seemed that Fate was inflexibly bent on preventing him from finishing that particular sentence this morning. For he had got thus far when Clifford Gandle, seizing the mustard-pot, rose with a maniac screech and bounded, wild-eyed, round the table at him.

LADY WICKHAM came downstairs and made her way like a stately galleon under sail towards the dining-room. Unlike others of the household, she was feeling particularly cheerful this morning. She liked fine weather, and the day was unusually fine. Also, she had resolved that after breakfast she would take Mr. Potter aside and use the full force of her commanding personality to extract from him something in the nature of an informal contract.

She would not, she decided, demand too



**Clifford Gandle, seizing the mustard-pot, rose with a maniac screech and bounded, wild-eyed, round the table at him.**

much at first. If he would consent to undertake the American publication of "Agatha's Vow," "A Strong Man's Love," and—possibly—"A Man For A' That," she would be willing to postpone discussion of "Meadowsweet," "Fetters of Fate," and the rest of her works. But if he thought he could eat her bread and salt and sidestep "Agatha's Vow," he had grievously under-estimated the power of her cold grey eye when it came to subduing such members of the animal kingdom as publishers.

There was a happy smile, therefore, on Lady Wickham's face as she entered the room. She was not actually singing, but she stopped only just short of it.

She was surprised to find that, except for her daughter Roberta, the dining-room was empty.

"Good morning, mother," said Bobbie.

"Good morning. Has Mr. Potter finished his breakfast?" Bobbie considered the question.

"I don't know if he had actually finished," she said. "But he didn't seem to want any more."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know, mother."

"When did he go?"

"He's only just left."

"I didn't meet him."

"He went out of the window."

The sunshine faded from Lady Wickham's face.

"Out of the window? Why?"

"I think it was because Clifford Gandle was between him and the door."

"What do you mean? Where is Clifford Gandle?"

"I don't know, mother. He went out of the window, too. They were both running down the drive when I last saw them." Bobbie's face grew pensive. "Mother, I've been thinking," she said. "Are you really sure that Clifford Gandle would be such a steadying influence for me? He seems to me rather eccentric."

"I cannot understand a word of what you are saying."

"Well, he is eccentric. At two o'clock this morning, Mr. Potter told me, he climbed in through Mr. Potter's window, made faces at him, and climbed out again. And just now——"

"Made faces at Mr. Potter?"

"Yes, mother. And just now Mr. Potter was peacefully eating his breakfast, when Clifford Gandle suddenly uttered a loud cry and sprang at him. Mr. Potter jumped out of window and Clifford Gandle jumped out after him and chased him down the drive. I thought Mr. Potter ran awfully well for an elderly man, but that sort of thing can't be good for him in the middle of breakfast."

Lady Wickham subsided into a chair.

"Is everybody mad?"

"I think Clifford Gandle must be. You know, these men who do wonderful things at the 'Varsity often do crack up suddenly. I was reading a case only yesterday about a man in America. He took every possible prize at Harvard or wherever it was, and then, just as everybody was predicting the most splendid future for him, he bit his aunt in the leg. He——"

"Go and find Mr. Potter," cried Lady Wickham. "I must speak to him."

"I'll try. But I don't believe it will be easy. I think he's gone for good."

Lady Wickham uttered a bereaved cry, such as a tigress might who sees its prey snatched from it.

"Gone!"

"He told me he was thinking of going. He said he couldn't stand Clifford Gandle's persecution any longer. And that was before breakfast, so I don't suppose he has changed his mind. I think he means to go on running."

A sigh like the whistling of the wind through the cracks in a broken heart escaped Lady Wickham.

"Mother," said Bobbie, "I've something to tell you. Last night Clifford Gandle asked me to marry him. I hadn't time to answer one way or the other, because just after he had proposed he jumped into the moat and tried to drown Mr. Potter; but if you really think he would be a steadying influence for me——"

Lady Wickham uttered a snort of agony.

"I forbid you to dream of marrying this man!"

"Very well, mother," said Bobbie, dutifully. She rose and moved to the sideboard. "Would you like an egg, mother?"

"No!"

"Some ham?"

"No!"

"Very well." Bobbie paused at the door. "Don't you think it would be a good idea," she said, "if I were to go and find Clifford Gandle and tell him to pack up and go away? I'm sure you won't like having him about after this."

Lady Wickham's eyes flashed fire.

"If that man dares to come back, I'll—I'll—Yes. Tell him to go. Tell him to go away and never let me set eyes on him again."

"Very well, mother," said Bobbie.

# The Down-and-Outer

By

## GERALD VILLIERS STUART

I.

*ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS*

THE yacht *Hyacinth* swung to the swift salty tide of a secluded creek that emptied into an Irish harbour. The hurrying water, because it reflected steep and luxuriantly wooded banks, was tinted bottle-green.

Every day, like a restive horse wrenching backwards around its would-be rider, the *Hyacinth* swung at the turning of the tide, until its bow faced out to sea—longingly, longingly. And to Hyacinth Headley, after whom Major Molyneux had named his yacht, watching from the rectory among the trees that change in orientation, a restless longing would be communicated. She too wanted to be out at sea, on her way to France, on her way to nurse war-broken men. There were "down-and-outers" in France. Lots of them to be cared for.

Since that day in August, 1914, when Dick Molyneux, Reserve of Officers, had dropped the yacht's anchor, and as he dropped it had seen a sergeant of the Royal Irish Constabulary waving a telegram at him from the shore, the anchor had never been raised. The telegram had ordered Molyneux to rejoin his regiment on mobilization. He had left the yacht he loved anchored to the channel of Inshallona Creek, and the girl he loved anchored to an invalid mother on its banks, and ridden forth to die. Rear-guard action of cavalry covering a retreat. All his life he had looked forward to that mad death charge. The death of his choice . . . but he had hated leaving the two Hyacinths, who held all there was of tenderness in his sternly simple soul.

The "Soldier's Will" made on the eve of battle had left to Hyacinth Headley everything of which Dick Molyneux was possessed. The twenty-ton yawl-rigged yacht was now her property, in addition to her betrothed's income of over two thousand a year.

The executors had wanted Hyacinth to sell the yacht. She had refused. She had refused, too, their alternative plan of dismantling the craft and laying her up. It had seemed to the dead soldier's *fiancée* that, if anywhere his soul could find earthly anchorage, this beloved possession tugging at her moorings in the woodland-tinted water would be that anchorage. Afloat, it swung, a thing of life, its wings ready for flight: laid up in a shed it would be as dead as its owner.

Very often, especially in the early days of her lover's bodily destruction, Hyacinth would row herself out and spend hours in meditation on board the yacht, waiting for a communion which eluded her.

Perhaps later he would come. To wait was the least she could do for the man who had loved her. She was not expectant of obvious manifestations or spirit séance phenomena, not even the touch of a vanished hand or the echo of a stilled voice—just an awareness of his presence, homing to the two magnets of his being, his yacht and his woman. Perhaps because she had been too flimsily his woman he could not find her now. There had been no parting gift of herself. She was neither lavish nor romantic nor sentimental. She was not a clinging, soft, cushiony girl. There was too much bone in her classic features, too much logic and common sense in her strongly individual personality. She was just handsome and the brightest and best of companions.

Dick Molyneux had been a moody man and she the steady sunshine which had dissipated the clouds of his moods. She must have done nearly all the talking. He had been such a silent man that now her imagination could not even reconstruct his voice.

When she listened she could only hear the tide go swiggering and lapping past the painted sides of the yacht: "Glub, lap; lap, glub; glub, glub, glub," like a baby's effort to articulate—the voice of the baby she would never have now. And how

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shamefully glad she was of that. She wanted to create in words and colour—not in flesh and blood. She who was artist more than woman.

Hyacinth Headley knew that she should never have accepted Dick Molyneux, tenderly fond of him though she was. She would have seen it through. God, in denying a full share of femininity, had given her great play-the-game qualities. Was her lack her fault? Weren't there too many women in the world sharing just a fixed supply of womanliness, not enough to go round? Perhaps some other woman had been given her share of femininity, and was suffering or rejoicing in it as the case might be.

It was in the spring of 1916 that Hyacinth made her last effort of memory concentration. She had been leaning against the furled mainsail watching the tender spring radiance creep over the steep woodland. She wished that she were tender and soft and warm like the spring and that Dick Molyneux were coming on board to take her half swooning with the joy of weakness surrendering to strength. She remembered how, when Dick used to call her "Very woman of very woman," she had not told him to the contrary nor ever challenged his ideals of her. Why should she? Her untidiness ought to have told him. Besides, wanting a man companion, she had been willing to pay the price and had believed in her ability to conceal that a price was being paid. Female subtlety could deceive male vanity.

Perhaps Dick, who knew all or nothing, knew now. Perhaps that was why his spirit held aloof or could not get through to her. Yet she could have loved him now because he was a down-and-outer, smashed, broken. Yes, she could love a down-and-outer, and him only she could love. Yes, now she could love him if he would let her.

"Come to me, Dick!" she cried, as the dead man's yacht quivered and tugged at the anchor chain in the breeze-kissed, sun-washed water. "Speak to me! Let me comfort you!"

"Glab! Glab! Glib! Glab! Glab!" answered the breeze-kissed tide, swiggering against the sides of the yacht, swiggering past the marking buoys and out to sea.

"I must come back in the morning and tidy the cabin," Hyacinth told herself as she pushed off in the dinghy. She always left the yacht untidy, as a man would leave his room, but the woman in her reproached. She always meant to tidy up the yacht and make it shipshape, but she never did, for that night her mother dragged her earthly anchor and drifted out to sea. At last Hyacinth Headley was free to go out to France and help to mend broken men and lavish herself on down-and-outers.

## II.

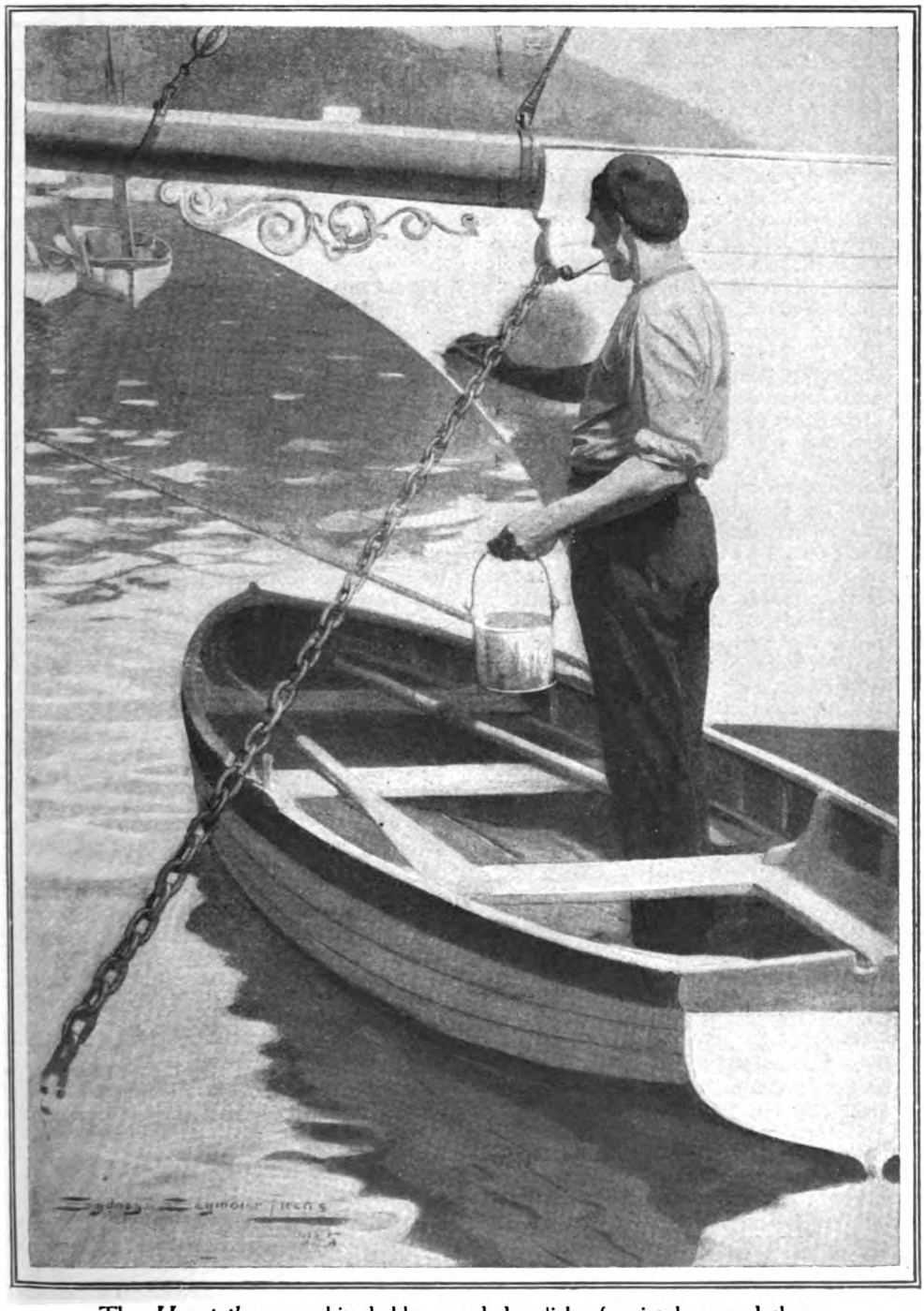
RALPH HARDRESS, once a sailor, now a temporary captain in an English regiment which in the autumn of 1917 had relieved a mutinous Irish reserve battalion, leaned against the boom of the *Hyacinth's* mainsail. He was absorbed in a daydream. The yacht had just swung at the turning of the tide. Her bow pointed out to sea longingly—longingly. She tugged at her anchor, as she had always tugged every day since Dick Molyneux had dropped it in August, 1914.

There came over Hardress an irresistible longing to raise that anchor, hoist those sails, release the caged bird. Together they would escape to the open sea. Ever since he had been knocked about by that high explosive shell his boyish susceptibility to unaccountable impulse had been intensified. For two months now he had been on light duty pending a Board. In the haversack attached to his Sam Browne belt there were two thousand pounds of regimental funds, for he had been detailed to proceed to Shannonmore to draw the pay money. It was nostalgia for the water that had caused the ex-sailor to take a train to the nearest harbour. There he had hired a row-boat and started to explore the broken shore line. Afloat once more, the hated Army routine banished from his mind, he was vaguely happy. When he found the *Hyacinth* at anchor in the lovely creek he was happier still. As happy as a man who has found a woman to love.

The creek reflected autumnal tints. The woods were stained with blood and tears and wine and ruined gold. The water beneath the *Hyacinth* was stained by the woods. The daydream strengthened its hold on Ralph Hardress. He saw himself provisioning the yacht for a voyage. At its end, the Canary Islands. When he was a sailor he had fallen in love with those islands. Sunshine and peace.

"Why not?" said the daydream to the man, and the nerve centre which should have told him why not was dumb. Stunned by high explosives.

Perhaps if, when exploring the cabin, he had not found an old yachting suit of Dick Molyneux's and, longing to be out of khaki for an hour, put it on, the psychology of clothes would have taken him back to the Army. As it was, dressed in that dark blue kit he forgot all about the regiment and started to tidy up the yacht, to make it shipshape. The more he worked at making the *Hyacinth* shipshape, the more he loved



The *Hyacinth* was a bit shabby, needed a lick of paint here and there.

her, and the more he loved her the more he wished her to look her best. So Ralph Hardress rowed to the village round the corner to buy some paint, as another man might set forth to buy some clothes for his girl. For the *Hyacinth* was a bit shabby, needed a lick of paint here and there.

The ex-sailor's brain worked quite logically along the lines of his daydream. He made inquiries about the yacht, learned that she was lately for sale, the lady to whom she belonged wishing to provide funds for the hospital in France, where she was a nurse.

The agent to whom Hardress was referred never questioned the story of this fine-looking, blue-eyed sailor who had been invalided out of the Navy and had been ordered a cruise. He gave a receipt for the Treasury notes and agreed to remain silent about the transaction until the sale was completed. He told the purchaser the story of the superstition which had kept the yacht at anchor.

Hardress meant to start for the Canary Islands on the following day. His daydream did not exclude the knowledge that search would be made for him; at first he felt all the suspense of the hunted. Indeed, when the provisions were on board and the water beakers filled he had gone forward to hoist the anchor. He meant to drop down with the tide and anchor again in the open harbour.

Was it imagination that when he put his hand on the winch crank another hand clamped over his and a voice whispered in his ear: "You can't start yet; the boat's not shipshape. There's a great deal to be done before she will do us credit?" Hardress looked around. He expected to see someone, to hear the voice again. There was no one there, and he could only hear the water crying: "Glib, glab; glib, glab, glub!" against the sides of the yacht.

But wherever the voice had come from, Hardress conceded the rightness of its judgment; it coincided with his own opinion. There *was* a great deal to be done yet. His sailor's instinct to have things right and shipshape prevailed over the anxiety to escape. He bought some more paint and many stores and he worked feverishly. "Better get off," he thought, "and do a bit of daubing at sea." Several times he started to raise the anchor, but always the hand over his and the voice which urged him to get her shipshape.

ON the day that they arrested Hardress, the *Hyacinth* looked like a bride with a rose at her breast. Spick and span and ready for sea—shipshape.

When Hyacinth Headley heard the story she refunded the purchase money to the Pay Department. In her haste to save the man from the consequences of his act she wired from France a sum which more than covered the defalcation. The hunted man who had fallen in love with a yacht, and rather than put to sea before she was shipshape had allowed himself to be captured, made a strange appeal to her imagination.

Dick Molyneux had loved the *Hyacinth* and herself, and now another man had fallen in love with the *Hyacinth*. The girl in the nurse's uniform wondered, allowed her imagination to play with the idea. Would this other man have been attracted to her as Dick Molyneux had been, and, if so, what would have been her response? What an eccentric dreamer the man must be, but surely—*lovable*—more lovable, perhaps, than the alert, purposeful, conventional soldier-man who had wanted to be her protector and had never realized that there were women whose nature impelled them to sustain rather than to cling.

Hyacinth would like to have protected the would-be abductor of her yacht. She felt that she was to blame for his predicament. Indulgent to a sentimental whim, a superstition, she had left the yacht alone in the lovely tidal creek to be a temptation to sailormen. But could she have done less for Dick Molyneux, in case—suppose there *were* earth-bound spirits?

After all, who could say that all the burials of kings with their golden possessions were Egyptian follies, or the Vikings buried in their favourite ships were fools? True that she herself on the yacht had never felt the least touch of a vanished hand, but she knew herself, in spite of her warm imagination, she knew something of the hard crust about her emotions, that unreleased feeling. This daydreamer may have been more susceptible to spirit touch and spirit voice. Suppose the yacht were haunted by its former owner and he had restrained the intruder from raising the anchor, had whispered the word "shipshape" to a poor sailorman? Poor imprisoned, misunderstood sailorman-soldier—down-and-outer!

Whenever the work of a field-hospital nurse permitted, Hyacinth's heart bled for the unknown and idealized him.

## III.

FOR five years now the world had been enjoying its uneasy peace. Hyacinth Headley had exchanged her nurse's uniform for an artist's smock. In a Chelsea studio she led the life of a bachelor girl. None of the broken men who had passed through her hands had been sufficiently down-and-out to release her emotions.

For her, the Irish rebellion had closed Ireland.

A studio in Chelsea and a week-end cottage —an ancient charcoal-burner's cottage in a Sussex oak-wood—these were now the habitations of Hyacinth Headley, and both of them she kept untidy.

Sometimes of late when the bachelor girl had arrived at " Woodman's Hut " she had been vaguely surprised to find how much neater she had left it than she had remembered, how surprisingly bright the copper warming pans and the old pewter looked, how polished the dark oak furniture, how undamp and undeserted felt the cottage in the wood.

Sometimes Hyacinth had a feeling that the place was haunted—not unpleasantly haunted—just the emanation of some human ego or the echoes of human thought with which she was in tune.

Of course, it was all imagination, but if it weren't, if the " Woodman's Hut " were haunted, she hoped that it was not the spirit of poor Dick Molyneux who tidied it up in her absence. If he could find out anything he must have found her out by now —and the clinging vine pretence with which she had fooled him when she wasn't coiling ropes for him or shifting the jib of the *Hyacinth*.

The bachelor girl with the down-and-outer complex was not a creature of habit ; yet never since she had bought the old charcoal-burner's cottage and done it up and christened it " Woodman's Hut " had she been near it except for week-ends until——

It was Hyacinth's conscience which drove her down that October day—Wednesday. She was certain that she had left the place in an awful mess on Monday, and on Saturday a woman was coming down with her for the week-end ; a womanly woman who kept her things as tidy as a bird keeps its feathers.

All the same, had she foreseen the change in the weather nothing would have beguiled her into that damp, dark wood and such a chapter of accidents—a missed train and a slow local alternative.

As the old cab drove away in the wet darkness and Hyacinth Headley put her latch-key in the Yale lock of " Woodman's Hut," she called herself a fool for coming. As the door opened *before the latch-key turned*, opened as though at the touch of a ghostly hand, for the first time in years her nerves betrayed her to the fiends of fear. Her knees ducked, a cold band encircled her waist. Oh, the drumming of the rain on the autumn leaves and the drumming of her heart's blood in her ears ! In vain she shouted after the cab, demanding its return. Wheels receding into the dark mocked her cry. The old cabman was hastening to " The Oak and Faggots " to break the ten-shilling note which Hyacinth had given him. Unaware of the cupidity in the eyes of two evil-looking strangers at the bar, he held forth contemptuously upon the temerity of rich old maids who came at night to lonely cottages.

The two criminals unloosed the cabman's tongue with strong drink ; they scented easy prey. A rich woman, a lone cottage, a dark night. Perfect !

HYACINTH HEADLEY, unaware of danger to come from without, concerned only about the possible danger within the unlocked abode, and hesitating upon the threshold, at last nerved herself to enter her week-end cottage. She fumbled for the electric torch that she always left on the table by the door. What a relief, what reassurance ! The torch was in its place.

Hyacinth was calling herself nervy, a fool. Of course there was no one in the cottage. Of course it was not haunted. She clicked on the torch and with the narrow beam swept the darkness and saw—— Oh, the suffocation in her breath ! What was that thing in the pool of light at the end of its beam ? That white face floating. The face of a man ? Or the spirit of a man ?

Hyacinth stifled a cry as she turned to flee, dropped the torch, and was enmeshed in darkness.

A sleepy voice called out, " Who's there ? " A match was struck.

Spirits do not strike matches. Hyacinth knew that she had to do with an intruder. Anger cast out fear, and Hyacinth had always found it easier to be angry than afraid.

" The owner of this cottage," she replied. " That's who's there. What do you want ? Clear out at once ! Do you hear me ? "

The matchlight died as a voice that was educated, though sullen, called through the darkness : " I shall not clear out. It's raining, and even if it wasn't—this is only Wednesday."

" How dare you ? " The question that always leaps to the lips of a helpless woman. " This is *my* house."

" No, it's your week-end cottage," came the voice in the dark, " and this is not a week-end. You never use it in the middle of the week, but I do. I live here. I make the place shipshape after you. God knows it needs it. Your week-end cottage, but my home—all the home I've got, and a nice mess——"

Some way you couldn't feel frightened of a man who scolded you for your besetting sin, but you could feel furiously angry. Hyacinth stooped for the electric torch, found it, and by its light found matches and

bedroom candlestick placed to her hand. Rain without and candlelight within, and a big, heavy-shouldered man with an underfed look, because his face was rather pallid under tan and his blue eyes had a certain ascetic resignation—or was it only dreamy vagueness? Hyacinth could not be sure. Only of this was she certain—the man was not a criminal, and must at one time have conformed to the requirements of her own world of gentlefolk. His clothes, in spite of stains and repairs, made a pathetic effort to be neat. They must have been made to order, of good material, and would have fitted a full-fed owner.

"Can't you see that you must leave my house at once, now that I *am* here? You must."

"What, in that rain? Just listen to it. I have to think of my clothes. I can't afford to get them wet. I can't afford to be ill. If I got ill I'd probably die. You'd only have to go to a nursing home. I have to think of these things——"

"I have to think of my reputation. One of us must leave this cottage at once, and as it's mine——"

"Yes, but only for week-ends and legally—I care nothing for the law."

"You will, though." Hyacinth was angry to the verge of tears. "You'll go to prison for this. Housebreaking, that's what it is. Yes, you'll go to prison."

"Prison's not so bad," said the sullen voice. "Shipshape sort of place prison, neater kept than the workhouse, I can tell you. I used to be indifferent between the two, but now give me prison every time." The intruder's tone was as matter-of-fact as though it compared hotels with pensions.

"You've been to prison—you're not ashamed to tell me! Why, you're a criminal, that's what you are. A criminal, and I'm in your power." Hyacinth felt that she was being melodramatic. What else could you be with crime about? But even on that the man threw cold water.

"My power! I've got no power. You're nearer the door than I. You could skin out if you wanted to—but no, you stay on and gas about your property rights—about your reputation."

The man laughed. "Reputation for you. Pneumonia for me. When a man's bumped as I have, hit the very floor of hell, as you might say, reputation has about as much meaning as a navigating quadrant to a landsman."

"Even to a criminal a woman's weakness might——" Hyacinth was horrified to find herself falling back on sex.

"It might if you were that sort. If you were a weak clinger you'd not be here. Wasting your breath. I'm not going out in the rain—not for anyone. There's nothing left in me to which you can appeal. Can't you see that? I've been to prison. I tell you, I'm a tramp. Once I stole two thousand pounds. I'd steal this cottage if I could, but the police wouldn't let me. I'm very fond of this cottage. I've kept it shipshape. I'd give it a lick of paint in places, only I've got no money for paint now."

THE blue eyes of the tramp grew dreamy, remote with memories of a day when he had had unlimited paint with which to express his love of some neglected object. Hyacinth's memory became entangled in the tramp's far-flung gaze, or perhaps it was what the man had said about the two thousand pounds, prison, and paint. There swam up a vision of the *Hyacinth* swinging with the turn of the tide in a lovely Irish creek. And with the vision of this yacht a vision of the yacht's lover and ravisher as her imagination had created and idealized him, the down-and-outer over whom she had allowed herself to yearn and weave daydreams. Why, he could have been half-brother to this pitiful, inconsequent derelict whom she was trying to turn out into the night and the rain! She expressed her realization of the difference 'twixt the dream and the business by a hard little laugh—protective, because her heart had suddenly gone soft and yearning. Was ever a man so down-and-out and childish as this man?

"Money for paint! Have you money for food?" Hyacinth demanded, harshly. "Are you hungry?"

"I have ten shillings a week. It's all my stepmother will let him send. You needn't be hungry if you have ten shillings a week and no rent. Ten shillings and a cottage most of the week. It's not so bad. Oatmeal, you know. Prison's great practice for living cheap."

Hyacinth's heart was bleeding now, actually bleeding for him. The pathos of this man! She could have kissed him. "But—but didn't you keep the two thousand pounds?" She was hoping against hope that this was not the man of her dreams.

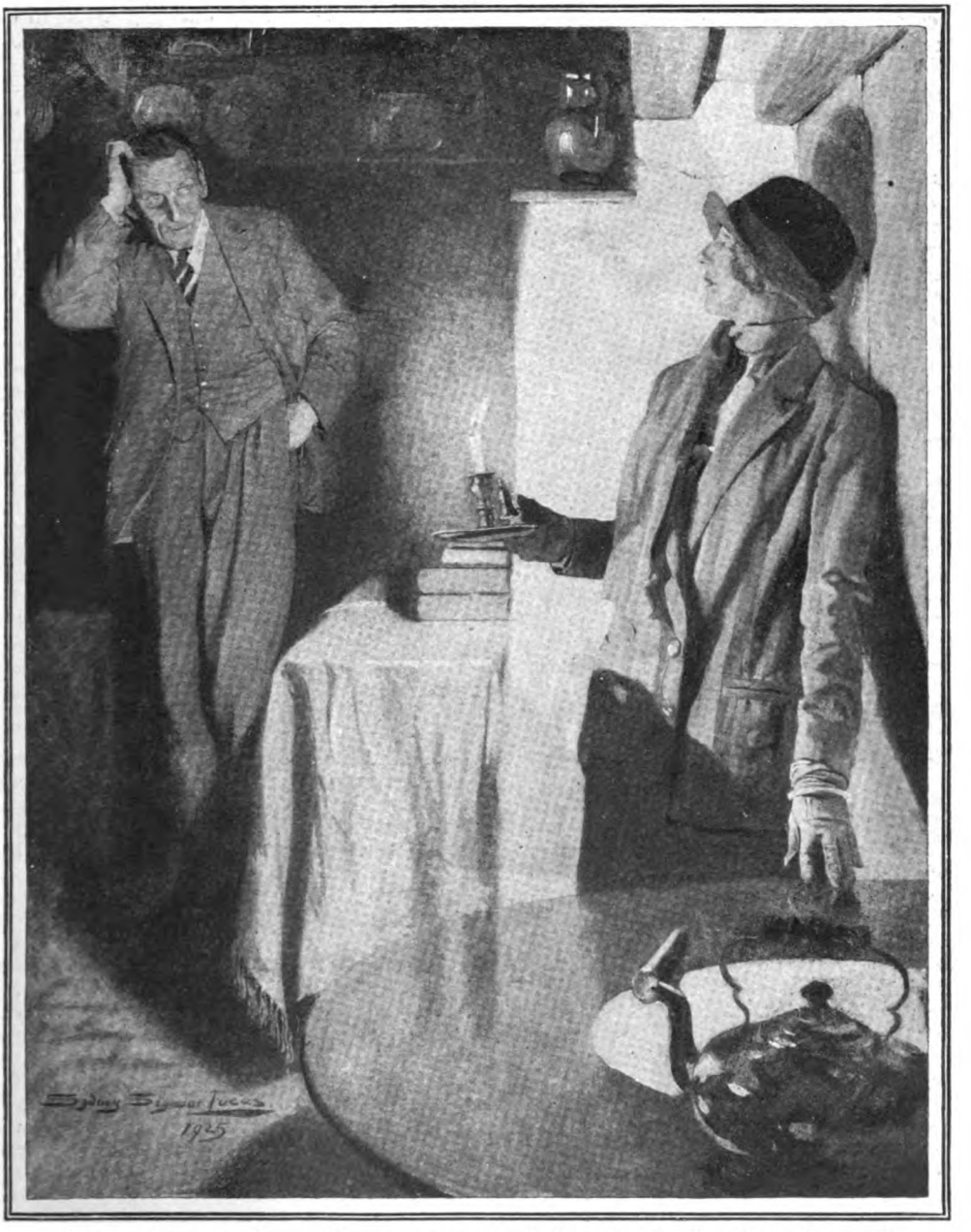
"No," replied the tramp, dreamily. "I bought a yacht with it and painted her up and made her shipshape."

"You—you bought a yacht? Was—was it at Inshallona?"

"That's the place. The *Hyacinth* was her name. Yawl-rigged she was, but I never sailed her."

"Why—why didn't you? Why didn't you escape when you could?"

"She was so damned untidy for one thing, and shabby, and then I have often



"One of us must leave this cottage at once," she said, "and as it's mine——"

thought, thinking things over in prison, that there was someone on board putting thoughts in my head, someone who didn't want that yacht sailed, wanted her to stay where she was. A feller always tries to explain his silly actions to himself, you see, and that's how I explained it. Haunted. By the chap who once owned her. Ships often get haunted. Every sailor knows that."

"Oh, you poor thing, you poor sailorman," thought Hyacinth, yearningly. "And I wanted to turn you out in the rain, you to whom Dick could talk when he couldn't talk to me. You could hear him and I couldn't."

"So that was your yacht, was it? I might have known. There's nothing so untidy as an untidy woman. Ships and prisons, that's what teaches men. I often see a resemblance in this cottage. It often reminded me. Funny we should have met."

This poor derelict criticizing her ways! Again Hyacinth laughed harshly to hide her emotion. The wind had risen, the candle flame flickered and waved in the draught, the dreamy, almost childish, blue eyes of the man with whom destiny was linking her looked questioningly into hers like a dog's waiting for orders. She was the stronger. He would not go forth into the storm, but any other thing she suggested he would do. The derelict awaited any explanation of the woman's laugh and was content without. It was as she pleased.

"Destiny is big, the world is small, but, yes, it's strange that, of all men in it, I should have met you. Yes, it's queer."

To herself Hyacinth said: "Did Dick bring that man here? But how the living Dick would have disapproved of him!"

"Sorry if it's been an inconvenience," said the tramp, less sullenly. "I keep my bed in the scullery. I'll be gone in the morning before you're up. That's to say, if the rain's over." Quite calmly, the amazing derelict lit a dead bedroom candle from the live one. "Good night, miss—er—er—Miss——"

HYACINTH awoke from a strange dream. She stood on the deck of the yacht. The derelict was there, and Dick. The derelict stood with folded arms leaning against the boom. Dick was hoisting the anchor for them. How the winch creaked and creaked and—— It wasn't the winch, that noise, but there was a noise and it was by the window. She wasn't dreaming. She was shuddering with the uncontrolled fear of the suddenly awakened. The shutters were being removed, creaking, from their hinges.

Before her paralysis passed, came a cold wet blast as the window opened—an electric torch beam stabbed her eyes, a hot, heavy, rough hand pressed her soft white throat.

"The sooner we get what we came for, lady, the quicker we'll be gone. We know you've got sparklers with you. Your cabby let that out. Hand over! See!" So growled the man with his hand on her throat. The other spoke no word. He took her hands and examined them for rings.

The men moved with the expert precision of specialists. To Hyacinth they were horribly reminiscent of doctor and surgeon round an operating table in a hospital. The man who choked her was the anæsthetist.

"There ain't only but one ring on her hands." The other operator, as he spoke, was endeavouring to remove it.

"That won't pay for the baby's milk," said the anæsthetist, contemptuously. "Come now, lady, get it off yer chest. Where's the goods?" He released the throat pressure, he was so certain that his victim would use her breath to give the required information. Instead she gave a scream.

"Stow that! Where d'yer think y'are? In Grosvenor Square? There's no one to 'ear yer, so chuck it, I tell yer."

"There's nothing in me to which you can appeal." That's what the derelict had said about the down-and-outer round whom she had woven dreams, but her intuition told her that the man misunderstood his own soul. He might come grudgingly, but he would come.

Ralph Hardress had told Hyacinth that there was nothing left in him to which a woman could appeal, but he had reckoned without the primal appeal of a woman's weakness calling to a man's strength.

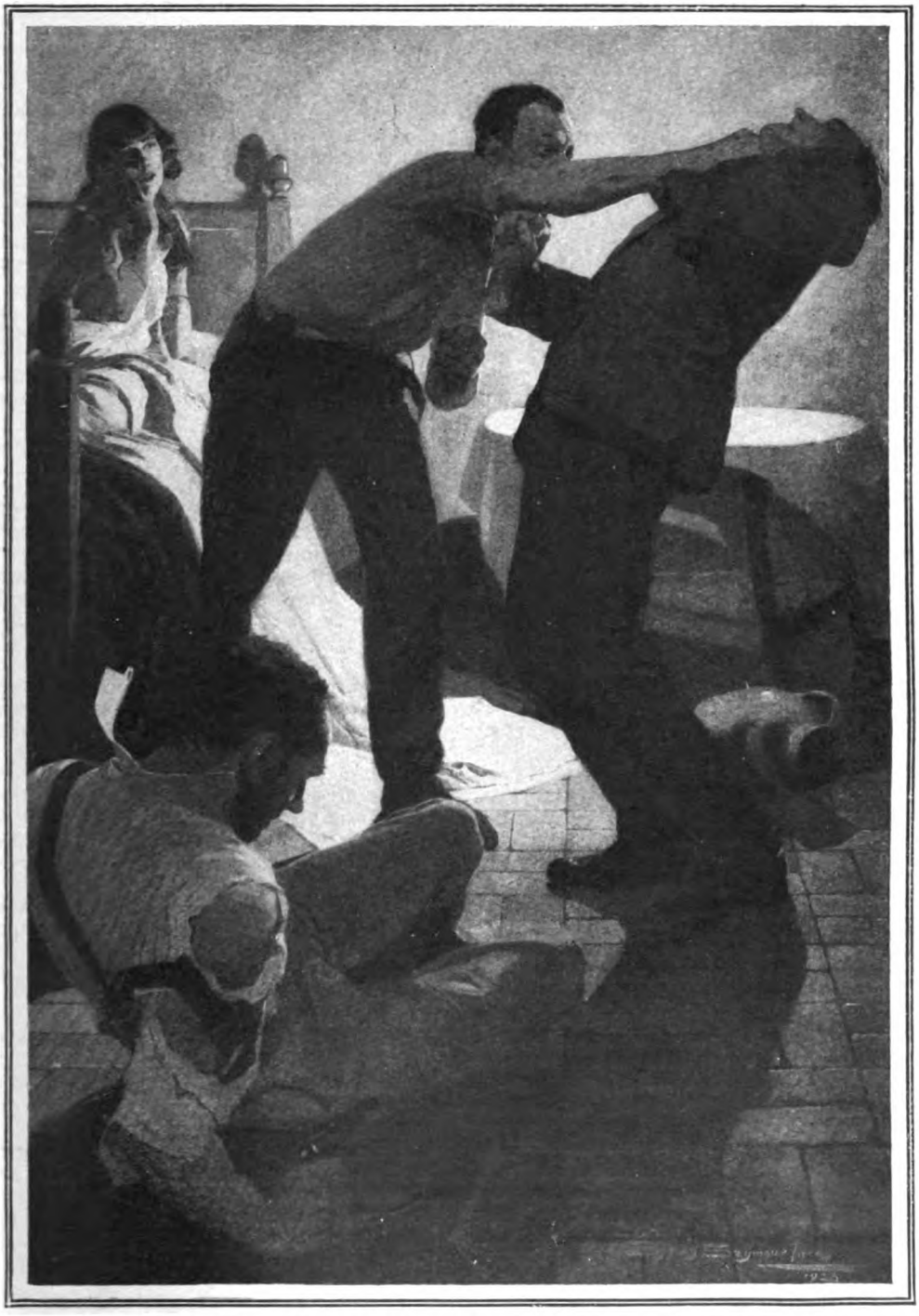
A woman shrieking with fear in the night is no longer a strong silent woman. She is just a woman, and the derelict in the scullery forgot his resentments against society and dashed forth to the rescue.

IN the daydreams about the down-and-outer who had tried to steal her yacht, Hyacinth had pictured him as a Viking at heart. If blue eyes ablaze and a Berserker rage make a Viking, Hyacinth saw her dream come true that night when the man who had tried to steal her cottage in the wood fought the two armed intruders from "The Oak and Faggots."

On Hardress's entry one evil-smelling desperado was holding Hyacinth down on her bed while he sought to tear the ring from her finger. The other was ransacking her dressing-table. The resemblance between the derelict's garb and their own misled the desperadoes. For a second they thought he had come to share the swag. The man at the dressing-table called out: "Hullo, mate!" just before he went down under a furious blow. Then the man at the bed turned savagely. He was a heavily-built man and knew many tricks of in-fighting, many ways of hurting an adversary.

The derelict was too angry to feel pain. A woman's cry had aroused his latent chivalry, but it was the intrusion of strangers into the privacy of what he regarded as his home which aroused his fighting rage.

All through the derelict's life, whenever he had formed an attachment to anything, someone had always come to take it away from him. . . . They had taken away the



All the pent-up grudges and dull resentments of a lifetime were expressing themselves in furious blows dealt by candle-light.

*Hyacinth* after he had made her shipshape, and now they were smashing up his cottage in the wood. All the pent-up grudges and dull resentments of a lifetime were expressing themselves in furious blows dealt by candle-light. He was being terribly hurt, but he never knew it. He did not even identify the explosion as a revolver shot, or feel the bullet tearing the tissues of his shoulder.

There is something terribly demoralizing and nightmarish to men who, hitting hard and often, fail to hurt. So when Hardress, by a lucky chin-point blow, knocked one of the desperadoes senseless, and Hyacinth, watching her opportunity, picked up his revolver, the other desperado was cowed and surrendered.

"So yer weren't alone after all! So that's yer little gyme, lydy, coming dahn ter the kentry at dark of night!" The desperado was giving vent to his venom as Hyacinth and Hardress were trussing him up.

Hardress turned savagely on the dishevelled man on the floor and pressed his heel against the fellow's mouth.

"You keep your dirty thoughts in your head, damn you, or I'll push your mouth in. I'm a trespasser in this house, same as yourself—pinched it from Mondays to Fridays—but no one else is going to pinch it or anything in it."

"Thank you," said Hyacinth. "You're a brick."

"Oh, that's all right," muttered the derelict. He was not admitting even now that he had merely reverted to being a well-born man. This woman and he had fought side by side, and he was the man of the house. There was nothing more in it than that, but no man should asperse her character. He hurried up the binding process. He was beginning to feel very queer and damaged. Hyacinth could have cried when the battered, white-faced man, with blood running down his sleeve, impatiently retied her sloppy granny bows and finished the trussing-up of the defeated desperadoes with neat sailor-like knots. Even as he rolled over insensible she thought that the swollen, blood-stained lips of her rescuer were forming the word "shipshape."

Then Hyacinth flung herself down by the prostrate body and kissed the battered face fiercely and tenderly. She loved this man. He had released something in her. Oh, his pathos and his courage and the illimitable down-and-outness of him!

Some women find it hard to love and submit to be loved, but there is somewhere in the world a man.

Some men find it hard to win love, but there is somewhere in the world a woman.

THE yacht *Hyacinth* swung at the turning of the tide of Inshallona Creek. A strong breeze of early spring ruffled the sun-kissed water, and the water, as it went swiggering out to sea, slapped the newly-painted sides of the yacht, crying: "Glab, glib, glab!" The wind blew towards the harbour mouth. The *Hyacinth's* wings were spreading for flight: the jib and mizzen had been raised, were flapping. The yacht was full of stores and very shipshape, very tidy.

Hyacinth Hardress, standing alone upon the deck, held out her arms to infinity.

"Dick," she cried, "we are starting, we are going to raise the anchor you dropped. We are off to the Canary Islands to great happiness, but if our happiness hurts you we won't go, not on your yacht. I believe that it is you who have brought this happiness to me, that you have understood. If I am wrong, give me a sign."

Ralph Hardress's head appeared above the companion-way, his broad shoulders followed. In his dark blue jacket he looked the typical care-free sailor. His blue eyes were no longer shadowed and vague. They were alive with purpose. Love and the care of a loving woman had made him the man God meant him to be.

"Treasure, did you call me? I heard your voice." The sailor looked possessively at his bride.

"My heart is always calling to yours, dear, but it wasn't to you I spoke. Ralph, you'd know, wouldn't you? You felt his presence before. You'd know if he didn't want—want that anchor raised? You wouldn't raise it in spite of him?"

"No, Treasure. I'm a superstitious sailor. I wouldn't sail a haunted ship."

Hardress kissed his wife as he passed forward to the anchor winch and began to wind in the chain.

"There is no hand on mine," he called back to Hyacinth, "no will restraining me. If there is anyone here, he wants us to start. The anchor is coming up so easily. *It's coming up like magic.*"

*A Romance of Real Life.*

# HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE HAREM AND HOW I BECAME A DRESSMAKER

TOLD BY

## Melek Hanoum,

**The Heroine of Loti's Great Romance, "Disenchanted."**

"KISMET"—it could not be helped. That I was to be a dressmaker was my written fate. And a dressmaker I have become! It is true, the luxurious existence of a Turkish Minister's daughter in her father's harem is not exactly the training most women receive for the profession of dressmaking. And it was certainly a roundabout way to my ultimate end. However, here I am; not only a dressmaker, but the first Turkish woman to enter the business world. And a dressmaker I must remain, whether I like it or not. Fortunately, however, I do like it. Fortunately there is no work in the world I love more than dressmaking, and, strangely enough, as a child I loved above all things making dresses.

But please let me introduce myself. My grandfather, the Marquis de Blosset de Châteauneuf, belonged to one of the most exclusive of the old French Faubourg St. Germain families. They made it a proud boast that their family had won undying glory in the Crusades, and they must be for ever honoured for the part they played in helping to exterminate the hated Turk. Rome also had blessed them in consequence.

I notice with awe and shame that I, the "Infidel Turk," have inherited the Crusader ancestor's large aristocratic nose. Nature does play us funny tricks sometimes; and when and where we least expect it.

Melek Hanoum, the first Turkish woman to enter the business world.

My grandfather, of course, followed the old French society traditions, and went into the army. It was a military mission of some kind which first took him to Turkey, and almost at once he became passionately interested in and attached to the Turks. Yet his final decision to change his nationality, drop his title, abjure his faith, and become plain Reschid Bey (a Moslem) was

prompted above all by his love for a beautiful Circassian, my grandmother. Others, less charitable, have declared it was the idea of having four wives that decided him to become a Moslem. That may be so. He was a Frenchman. At any rate, he used the Prophet's permission to the full. And his family was so large that he did not even know all his own children, though, according to the Moslem law, they are all legitimate.

One day they came to tell him that one of his children had died; but he had forgotten the child, and almost the existence of the mother. Alas, in this case he was neither a Frenchman nor a Turk! That, however, was the frivolous side of my grandfather's change of nationality. He was a charming man, with exquisite manners; a man of great culture, whom the Turkish nation held in respect. His influence, too, was widely felt, and to him can be traced indirectly the whole modern Turkish movement.

It appears that a cultured Turk, by name Schinassi, became very friendly with my grandfather. They studied together, and so delighted was the Turk that he left no stone unturned till he went himself to France "to see and learn." In Paris he was, one might almost say, intoxicated with ideas. He studied all the new movements, political, literary, or otherwise, and steeped himself in Rousseauism. To him J. J. Rousseau was almost a god, and far more than a prophet. He knew nearly all the Frenchman had written by heart, and when at last the Turk's long stay in the French capital came to an end, he came back with a very carefully-prepared plan and sowed the seeds of what was to be the Young Turk, and later the Nationalist, movement. He also began a literary campaign which reformed the whole Turkish literature. Under his influence the involved Persian and Arabic constructions vanished for ever. He showed his compatriots that Turkish could be written in the straightforward, clear French way, and with Turkish, not Arabic and Persian, words, and gradually the new style was adopted. That, then, in a nutshell, was my grandfather's work for Turkey.

MY father, Noury Bey, my grandfather's eldest child, went into the Turkish diplomatic service, and finally became Abdul Hamid's Minister of Foreign Affairs. What this high honour meant only a Turk could understand! How lucky one was to be alive at all under that terrible *régime* only a Turk could tell! We were all, men and women and, above all, the Ministers of State, at the mercy of any calumny. Any lie reported by Abdul Hamid's spies to His August Majesty could have resulted in death, expulsion, or ruin for us all. No morning could possibly tell what the end of the day could bring forth; and none dared guess. How is it possible that in this enlightened twentieth century such a monster as Abdul Hamid could have lived and reigned and made us all suffer so horribly?

But, above all, the cloistered, pampered existence we were forced to lead in our father's harem did not satisfy us. The European blood in us seemed to revolt against this "slavery," and we were in consequence far more unhappy than we ought to have been.

And my father, after all, was only half a Turk, and very much more than half a Frenchman in his moments of leisure. He had above all the Frenchman's love of his children. We were the apple of his eye, he was so proud of our poor little accomplishments. Educated by English, French, German, and Italian governesses, we soon learnt and spoke, besides the three Oriental languages necessary for cultured people, five European languages. We also learnt music, singing, painting, drawing, embroidery; in fact, every possible accomplishment. And our mother understood nothing of this extraordinary education. She spoke only Turkish, and cared not at all for Europe and its ways, though she never once raised her voice to question the master's (our father's) will in any way. She would have accepted anything. She was a Turk of the old school, and between her and us was a gulf that could not be bridged.

There being no Moslem social life in the Turkish capital in those dreadful days of Hamid (there were, of course, social functions at the foreign Embassies), it was my sister and I who supplied our father with social life. When the Ambassadors accredited to the Porte came to see him, it was we—hidden behind screens—who played and sang for his guests. My sister, by the way, was a very good musician. It was she who composed the triumphal march for the Kaiser's entrance into Constantinople. For this quite good composition she was decorated by him. Considering that she had never been privileged, till she came to Europe, to hear a better performer than herself, she was, indeed, to be congratulated on her achievement.

Without in the least realizing what he was doing, our father gave us a European education; first of all for his own enjoyment. It never crossed his mind that when the time came for us to be Eastern women it would be perfectly impossible for us to be Eastern in the full sense of all that it meant. Also we "embroidered" our father's stories

of his beloved France, created for ourselves a France that never could exist, and envied not only the Europeans from the Embassies with whom we came in contact, but the tradespeople too. To us every Oriental was unhappy; every European happy. Ah, how foolish we were!

IN those far-away days high-born ladies did not go shopping; the shops came to them. Enterprising French dressmaking firms sent their representatives round the harems for orders; and a roaring trade they did. The wives ordered—the Pashas paid the bills. One could well understand the answer a witty Pasha gave as a reason why polygamy had vanished for ever. "When four wives meant four tillers of the land," he said, "there was some sense in polygamy, but not when they bought their dresses in Paris." And how I envied these free-born women dressmakers, who could come and go as they liked; their faces unveiled. Yet when I told them how willingly I would have exchanged their lot for mine, they thought I was joking. Little, however, did I think then that a day would come when I should really be a Paris dressmaker.

But I did take up dressmaking seriously in those days of my youth. It was forbidden, therefore to me it was doubly attractive, and I set to work with real ardour to learn my new profession. First of all I studied anatomy in books I found in my father's library. What a valuable asset for a dressmaker! I studied above all the old Greek forms; also the old Circassian forms of dress. They are so hygienic, and so exquisitely lovely; all our dresses have come from these races. Circassians, I believe, have the finest figures of all women; they ride wild horses bare-backed and are rarely unseated, and walk with the carriage of an Empress. And who has not heard of their golden hair and dark eyes? No wonder our rulers selected their wives from amongst these beautiful women.

When I had once mastered anatomy, my next step was to cut out figures in cardboard and dress them in paper dresses, until finally I was able to cut without fear and plunge my scissors into the lovely stuffs of my own country. I always feel like a fairy handling a rainbow every time I cut into a lovely stuff. How I love to touch its soft texture! And to me making a dress is, and always has been, an unending joy. Then I dressed the slaves. They asked for nothing better, the dear little creatures! The eternal feminine all the world over will always respond to dress! Then I had processions of slaves round the rooms of the palace. This game became one of our favourites. It passed the time. I never see a procession of mannequins in our dressmaking establishment now without thinking of my dear slaves away yonder; although, let me add, my childhood slaves were far more beautiful than my Western mannequins.

For a while, then, I was happy, absorbed in my dressmaking. Then came a day when I said to myself: "You are only an amateur; you have had no professional experience!" And when I saw how impossible it was to get professional experience, I at once set out to find the way. I took my life in my own hands, it is true, but I got my experience. And this is how I did it. For a very large bribe one of the Greek merchants who visited our harem to sell her wares arranged for me to work in a dressmaker's establishment. For a few hours daily I worked. Dressed in a shabby cloak and veil of one of the slaves, I slipped out of the harem; changed at the merchant's house into a coat and skirt and hat, and then went to the dressmaking establishment, and none asked who I was, none guessed, and I worked at my new profession, which was a real delight to me. Had I been caught, as I so easily might have been, what would have been my fate? How many dressmakers have had to risk their lives as I did to have my training?

And so, with my new hobby absorbing my attention, life became bearable. My sister and I, it is true, were veiled. Up till the age of ten we had led the existence of little European children—dancing and riding and mixing with European boys. After we were veiled all frivolity had to cease. Only male relations visited us from that unhappy day, and one does not always appreciate the society of relatives. Only a Turkish woman, able to understand the good things of life, can know what a young girl suffers when she is veiled. It makes life from that time an existence of mourning. There is always a barrier between you and life. And it should not be so!

The great Prophet of Islam, when he legislated for a people brought by him from the darkness of barbarism to the light of civilization, thought it wiser that a married woman's crowning glory, her hair, should be veiled. He had no idea that jealous manhood could turn and distort his suggestion in the way they had done. Alas, is not this the tragedy that follows the work of all reformers? What would Mohammed himself have said had he seen us swathed in the thick canvas veils the Hamidian *régime* required us to wear? What would he have felt had he known (he who loved the sun and the light) that a black veil shut out for ever the sun and light; and above all a pall of mourning, as it were, had been placed over our souls; we who, as a nation, never wear mourning for our dead?

Then came the tragedy. My sister was married, and married according to our Eastern customs. For a thinking woman the outrage of such a situation was impossible. Only after the contract was signed and sealed and the woman bound for life did she see her "fate" for the first time. He, the male, with the simple words, "I divorce you," could set himself free. She, the wife, had to stay as long as he wished. She was his possession, given away to him without ever having been consulted, and without having seen him.

My brother-in-law, let it be said in all justice, was a fine man. A kind husband and a gentleman, he has had a brilliant career, himself ultimately becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was my father's secretary, and my father was devoted to him, and thought he would make an ideal husband for the daughter he dearly loved. Simply because she was a victim of this iniquitous system, my sister hated her husband, and made me hate him too. Poor man! Was it his fault? The whole system was wrong and must be changed. But who would change it? We made up our minds we would do so. We would find some way to work for the freedom of Turkish women. And we did.

But even that was not easy. How could we get a hearing? Supposing we wrote articles, who would publish them? Besides, we should be discovered and punished. Would that advance our position? Our neighbour, a poet, had come to grief. Abdul Hamid made short work of anyone who could handle a pen. In the middle of the night His Majesty's spies "descended on" our neighbour's house, and a very careful search was made amongst all his papers. Only some very innocent poetry was found. Yet he and his family just disappeared, and for a long time none dared to ask where they had gone. No, the question of airing our grievances by our pen was impossible. We must find some other way.

Since my sister's marriage, and since our sworn resolve to do something, we created for ourselves a new "hobby"—our cause. Every day we met to talk about grievances. We read about the women of other countries; we read everything we could lay our hands on—good, bad, and indifferent; "our cause" soon became a *religion* for us. Then we arranged dinners—women's dinners, naturally; no men were admitted—to discuss the improvement of our lot. Yet "our cause" made no progress. What could we do? How could we make ourselves heard? It was just at that period, too, that our dinners, and above all the music, the excuse for the meetings, were stopped by order of our Sovereign Lord Abdul Hamid. A very serious attempt to assassinate him had been made by a Belgian anarchist. How could we dare to wish to play the piano and sing when the life of our "beloved" Emperor had been in danger! The whole nation was plunged into a kind of social mourning—as a thank-offering for his miraculous escape.

Nevertheless, my sister and I continued to work at "our cause." Our arguments were these: How could the civilized world help us to change our suffering if it did not know what we were suffering? How could we find a foreign pen powerful enough to defend us, able to understand us, above all willing to do it? Fate at that moment brought Pierre Loti to our shores. We made up our minds we would meet Loti, and Loti should defend us.

Zeyneb—Melek Hanoum's sister—seated on her bridal throne to receive the congratulations of her friends

It is true, Loti had always been a friend of the Turks. He loved our civilization. He could help us. We knew his works almost by heart. We knew that he was a poet in prose, although

*Photo: E. N. A.*

**Pierre Loti, the famous French author, whose well-known novel, "Disenchanted," is based on the romantic story of Melek Hanoum and her sister.**

he always based his novels on real life. This was the case with his stories of "Aziadé" and "Madame Chrysanthème," and we knew that if he wrote our story he must make that story his own; it was for us to construct it for him. And so the story which ultimately became "Les Désenchantées" became for us a passionate interest. It began by our writing to the naval officer Viaud (Loti)—*poste restante*, and our making a rendezvous with him, just as Loti describes it in the book. The danger of the meetings fascinated him. He was interested in Turkish women, and the long letters in the book signed Zeyneb, Melek, and Djénane were written by my sister and me—a French lady we took into our confidence corrected them for us. But the letters are ours, and our diary.

Although the story of "Les Désenchantées" has been translated into all languages and very widely read, it would perhaps be as well to recall the story. Three high-born Turkish women, Djénane, Melek, and Zeyneb, educated by European governesses, are discontented with their lot. One of them is married according to the Eastern custom to a man she has never seen, and dislikes him in consequence. In order to make their grievances known to the civilized world they write to a well-known French novelist, begging him to take up their cause. He is interested, and comes to Constantinople. As they are Moslem women, and cannot make his acquaintance, they arrange the most extraordinary meetings for him, in the most out-of-the-way places; in the meanwhile they pour out to him, in letters, all their innermost soul. Melek dies; Djénane kills herself for love of the French novelist who has never seen her unveiled. Zeyneb only remains. That is the story. Almost our life story—arranged by Loti's magic pen, and framed by the most exquisite pen pictures of our glorious country that any man ever wrote.

Now that Loti is dead, and it has been an open secret for some time that we (my sister and I) gave Loti the material for that work, it would be as well to speak of Djénane. Who was she? No one in particular was Djénane. One day it was one cousin; one day another; we were always three veiled women; not till we met in Paris did Loti ever see our faces. We have been accused of making a dupe of Loti. But this is untrue. For the sake of the story Djénane had to live and die; for the sake of the story Loti had to believe she died for love of him and was buried. A coffin with an imaginary Djénane was put in the earth. Loti had a little altar erected in memory of her at his home in Rochefort. Was it our duty to kill his illusion? Are not some lies finer than the truth?

Our book, "our cause," had to be the finest story that could be produced. I, Melek, did not hesitate to die in order to supply Loti with the necessary material to describe a picturesque Turkish funeral. Why not then Djénane? Her tragic death at the end was necessary for the story, and Loti could not have written it had he only "imagined" her dead. Besides, a gentleman is a gentleman. A woman whose face he had never seen killed herself for love of him. She had poured out her soul to him—the whole cause of Turkish women was henceforward sacred to Loti, in memory of Djénane; that is what we wanted.

It is unjust to say "Les Désenchantées" was to us only a pastime or a joke. That is not the case. How we plotted and planned to make our meetings as romantic and picturesque as possible! How we schemed to arrange things so that Loti should feel both the sadness and the futility of our existence! With no gift of psychology at all, this "painter" was to write a novel. We had to dot all his "i's" for him, and the book was, therefore, ours, though he wrote it; if it is not his best work, as many say it is, it certainly was the most read. And the letters we wrote! It is true, French was our language; we wrote French before we wrote Turkish, and, of course, much better. Nevertheless, for anyone who knows Loti and his work, anyone who knows his perfect style, it goes without saying that to write those letters for him at all we had to give ourselves up to hours of careful thought and work. We had to make up our minds that the whole civilized world should hear our story, we had worked with that sublime end in view, we sought no notoriety; we could rely absolutely on the discretion of Loti; he had no idea who we were; yet the book was about to appear! Loti's preface stating that "the heroines never existed" was useless. We could easily be recognized behind the thin veil of fiction; there was nothing to do but risk all and fly. If we stayed, we said, we must meet our doom. But if we fly, we have one chance out of ten to reach Paris in safety; so escape we must and without delay. We knew that our departure meant good-bye to Turkey, perhaps for ever. As long as Abdul Hamid was on the throne we could never return, yet surely a day would come when his death, or revolution, would free us from that hideous criminal madman, and gain the position of women. But we said, once in France, we will live with our French relatives, and all will be well. Fate, however, had willed otherwise. We had whole chapters of tragedy yet to live. It just had to be. It was written. KISMET!

WE have so often been reproached with not having counted the cost of our flight! Does anyone in the face of grave danger ever count the cost? We were not prepared to face the inevitable scandal at home; we were, so we supposed, utterly wretched and bored with our useless harem existence. All our lives we had dreamed of France, where we imagined everyone was happy and free; our great dream now was to work for the liberty of Turkish women; our flight would be a public protest. Alas, how could we have supposed we were simply leaving the frying-pan for the fire?

It is true we were not lacking in courage; even our most severe critics have not denied us that attribute. To give us our due, however, one must have been a Turk under the terror of an Hamidian *régime* to understand what it meant for the two daughters of a Turkish Cabinet Minister to leave Constantinople and go to Europe! Turkish women in those days did not travel. All the families of high officials were watched day and night. We, because of our French blood, were specially supervised. Our Greek and Armenian servants were all bribed, and our black attendants hardly ever left us. Yet so exasperated were we that we dared all to leave the country and find freedom. In order to leave the country the first thing to do was to procure passports. These we purchased from our Polish music mistress. She and her two daughters, fortunately or unfortunately for us, were leaving Constantinople to live in Egypt, otherwise she could not have sold us the passports. One daughter was to come with us to Paris, and we used the three passports, whilst the mother travelled to Egypt with the other daughter and false passports. Naturally, the price we had to pay for this favour was exorbitant; one can imagine the jewels and precious things we had to dispose of to pay this bill; practically the price of seeing the good lady installed in her new home. However, we paid the price. There was no other way—who else could give us passports?

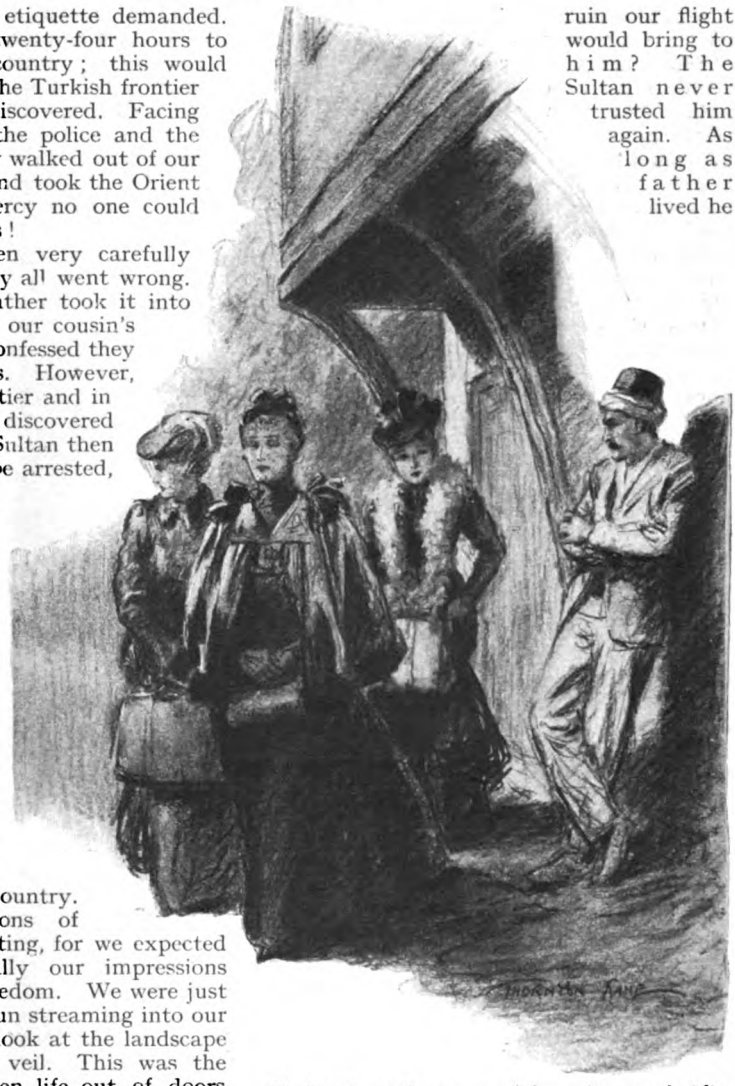
My sister, who was a wonderful actress, played the part of the mother to perfection. She had studied the old lady's every gesture, she had acquired her voice and mannerisms to perfection, and her corked wrinkles and grey curls were charming. I and Mademoiselle X. played the part of the other two daughters. We spoke less, so it was not necessary for us to study our parts as carefully as "our mother." We had prepared everything. All the servants were dispatched on errands. A pair of shoes was placed outside the harem door so that, should the master of the house appear, he would understand a lady visitor was within,

and not enter as our etiquette demanded. We were to go for twenty-four hours to visit cousins in the country; this would give us time to cross the Turkish frontier before our flight was discovered. Facing the vigilant eyes of the police and the secret police, we boldly walked out of our Polish friend's house and took the Orient express. What a mercy no one could hear our beating hearts!

Our plans had been very carefully laid, yet they so nearly all went wrong. That afternoon our father took it into his head to join us at our cousin's country house—they confessed they did not even expect us. However, we were over the frontier and in Belgrade before it was discovered where we were. The Sultan then telegraphed for us to be arrested, as I was still a minor, and my father quickly followed us there himself. Nothing could have saved us but the devotion of Serbian friends, who resented our being taken back to our sure and certain "fate." With another change of plans we finally arrived in Paris—the goal of all our years of waiting and planning and scheming — the capital of France, our grandfather's beloved country.

Our first impressions of France were disappointing, for we expected too much, and naturally our impressions were impressions of freedom. We were just overjoyed to see the sun streaming into our rooms at Nice and to look at the landscape all around without a veil. This was the first time we had seen life out of doors except through a veil, and indoors through latticed windows, and we enjoyed the change to the full. To give our impressions of France, however, would be unfair. The France of our dreams never could exist. Our French relatives were frigidly polite to us poor Moslem fugitives. What interest could they take in us, since they had ceased even to pronounce the name of our grandfather, who had given up his land and abjured his Faith? We were in Europe, and in Europe we had to stay. We had left our land and were disgraced. The shame of it killed our poor mother; our father followed her very shortly; and my young brother became head of the family.

Poor father! How could we guess what ruin our flight would bring to him? The Sultan never trusted him again. As long as father lived he supplied us with ample means. This he did in secret, for he had to pretend to have nothing more to do with us.



Facing the vigilant eyes of the police, we boldly walked out of our Polish friend's house.

Shortly after father's death I married a rich Polish nobleman with large estates in Russia, and began quite a new chapter in my life's story. My *fiancé* was handsome, and a very talented composer. His music was even then much appreciated and had been performed at the best concerts. And I loved him with my whole heart.

In order to make my marriage valid, I had to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, the religion of my grandfather. The Pope, for our wedding, sent us his special blessing.

Alas, how terrible these changes of religion are! When my grandfather left the Roman Church for ever the Moslems were overjoyed, but his own people never forgave him. When I went back to the Church of my grandfather, Rome sent me its blessing, but my poor mother broke her heart; and the law of my country, Turkey, disinherited me. We speak so lightly of conversions and changes of nationality; I know something of what they mean; and most sincerely do I pity all those who change either their religion or their nationality. Is the best man on earth worthy of this sacrifice—or the best woman?

Melek Hanoum and her sister Zeyneb.

My married life passed with very little to record. Comfort and leisure and happiness are really quite inartistic. After the storm I had come into the haven for a while, and therefore the story was without interest. Four little lives were quickly given to me. I was like a girl again playing with her dolls, and, although I did not require to do so, I made all their clothes. What a delight it was for me to see a pretty model in a shop-window, quickly buy the stuff, and then make it for my children! Naturally I made far, far more dresses than they could ever wear. After all, why not, since it was for me such a pleasure?

Being both rich and hospitable, my husband and I were not lacking friends. We had a house in Paris full of artistic treasures, a house in Nice, and my husband's parents had large estates in Russia from which they drew their immense revenues. Our ample means allowed us to help musicians, writers, and artists, who stayed with us for weeks at a time; it was a joy for us to discover talent and help it to have its chance. The story of those years, then, as they slipped by, and we never realized how happy we were, would be, if it were written, the story of the great men and women who honoured us with their friendship.

But, alas, happiness is so seldom of long duration. The war, which brought so many tragedies in its train, threw a cloud of sorrow over us at once. My sister, who had been my companion throughout my life, she who was the ringleader in our flight and all the mad things we undertook, was sent back to Turkey. She and I, she and my Turkish family, were henceforward enemies. I had to mingle my prayers with those of my husband's country, and pray for the defeat of my Turkish family, the family I loved so deeply, because I had made them suffer. Then followed the Russian revolution and ruin for us. We, like others whose fortune was in Russia, first of all sold our works of art, then our jewels, and then our property, and finally had to face life and all the sadness and hardship it means when you have to work without having any particular training for work, and no capital to go into business.

Musical composition is a very delightful hobby, it is true, but when one has four children to keep, one has to give them bread and butter and education, and this is not possible on musical composition. My husband was lucky in finding a position as conductor of a cinema orchestra. The only profession he had supposed he would exercise was that of a leisured gentleman. Therefore, I consider it fortunate for him to find a job at all—particularly as his aristocratic appearance and manners have been distinctly to his disadvantage—in getting work.

For me there was no hesitation. I at once decided to take up dressmaking professionally. One of the leading firms, Drecoll, where in the old days my family were good customers, gave me a position as saleswoman, and again I consider I was lucky to get my experience in this admirable house before starting my own business.

And so my childhood's dream has come true. Here I am, a dressmaker, and really quite satisfied with my lot. But then, I am a fatalist. Would I change my lot? Would I do again what I did? Would I, if I had the chance, go back to Turkey? How many times a day am I not asked those absurd

questions by curious customers! I smile—one sells dresses more easily when one smiles. "Supposing it is 'written' I must do a second time what I have done," I say, "then do it I will." And the more I think of it, the more I wonder how anyone but a fatalist can live at all. How it has helped me in all I do and endure!

That is why, when the great ladies who used to be our guests, and who kindly give me their custom, whisper together about my "better days," I wonder if the words are quite accurate. They were "other" days—I wonder whether they really were better. They were other days, days so different it seems futile to try and compare them. Indeed, when a few words of Turkish spoken by a compatriot bring back the whole story of my youth, our family palaces on the shores of the Bosphorus, our luxury, our jewels, the exquisite scenery and the unforgettable sunsets of my own beloved land, I wonder if I am not just dreaming that someone else—some ancestor—some distant relation—did not lead that strange life away yonder, and not I, the dressmaker. Sometimes, in spite of myself, the tears will flow. Then I quickly escape to a fitting-room, brush them away, and say to myself: "Provided you can bring up your children to be honest citizens, what does anything matter?" What, after all, does society mean? I have as colleagues other Ministers' daughters—we are a very happy company. I read enough works in my youth to store my mind with treasures for ever. My talent for languages is a great asset; now and again I can go to theatres and appreciate them more now than when I could go as often as I chose.

And my early Turkish training in true democracy (even in the terrible days of Hamid Turkey was the country where the principles of true democracy were best put into practice) is perhaps my finest business asset.

One has to recall our manner of entertaining away yonder to understand exactly what I mean. We were all sisters. To our marriage feasts came the wives of Grand Viziers, the wives and daughters of Ministers and diplomatists, and the poor woman who served. Each was welcome. Each was treated with respect. Each knew her place. The serving woman sat on the floor, and, although she was full of respect for the great ladies, there was none of the snobbishness and cringing of the lower orders in the West. Ah! the beautiful democracy of my own land! How I long for it above everything else! Why have social distinctions and money and worldly gain crushed out from the Western civilization the beautiful words "brother and sister"? Why has Europe, in its race after wealth, forgotten those words? And so, thanks to my early Turkish training, I can hold my own with the most exacting and disagreeable customers, and help my workers do the same. Sometimes they say to me: "Who are you? You are not just an ordinary business woman!" But I laugh and say: "I

**Thanks to my early Turkish training, I can hold my own with the most exacting customers.**

am only a woman trying to do her duty and to make the lives of my workers as happy as possible." I feel so sorry for them all. I know what a hard, exhausting day can mean. I know that I, too, have to go back to a hard evening's work of dressmaking at home, but I have a home and children—they have nothing. They are beautiful—indeed, I wonder how in the face of all the terrible temptations of Paris they can keep their heads above water at all. Poor children!

That educated women are now finding their way into business is, after all, a great asset. Women of education ought to direct big business houses, women of education ought to set the taste in dress, women of education will have for some time to guide those who are finding their way socially, and help them spend their newly-gotten wealth, and, above all, prevent them from making themselves ridiculous.

And now I ask myself, since I have shown Turkish women the way into the business world, will they follow? They have proved they can have energy and courage when it is necessary. They have done their part in saving their country from foreign invasion; why should they not bear their share of the family financial burdens, as I do? Their fatalism will help them as workers, and a new sense of dignity will be theirs when they are doing their best to help their husbands. The dignity that has come to me as the helpmate of my husband is my greatest comfort in my business life. I never felt it when I was simply the wife of a rich husband and the mother of my children. But I feel it now, and my husband, too, feels it. He does not say so, but I know.

And so, after all, my whole career, hard and interesting as it has been, was "written," and I could not change it. So I regret nothing—of what use?

Our flight from Turkey, however, so unkindly criticized, was nevertheless necessary. After all, we, with the help of Pierre Loti, struck a blow for freedom which was heard throughout the civilized world. Now that Turkish women are free—the *régime* of Mustapha Kemal has brought for Turkish women an indescribable *bien-être*—and now that the old days of Hamid are remembered only as a terrible nightmare, it has been forgotten, but we paid for our altruism with the bitter sorrow of exile. Yet we struck our blow—the first—and surely some honour belongs to the pioneer.

# ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 151.

(*The Third of the Series.*)

A POET died; in memory
A poet wrote an elegy.

1. They tell of wood and shade; but still,
   Made hot, they tell of camp and drill.
2. A trench. What has to be in time,
   If it would save, provides a rhyme.
3. Abandoned one! And here one reads
   How one its anagram succeeds.
4. A Standard holds no longer sway –
   'Tis Twentieth Century to-day.
5. A coin, a messenger divine,
   Winged innocence adorning shrine.
6. The family here comes in sight,
   The lady is quite definite.
7. A sudden outburst, sudden start,
   She is the darling of my heart.

PAX.

*Answers to Acrostic No. 151 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on February 11th.*

*To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 150.

(*The Second of the Series.*)

Two well-known stations here we see,
Whence you may travel south or west;
And each of them, you will agree,
A victory may well suggest.

1. By many made, by many also broken.
2. Here is a thought, conveyed when words are spoken.
3. The outer surface of what's often eaten.
4. This flies; no wonder! For it's often beaten.
5. **Reverse this light, and last will now be first.**
6. **Thrust back; or man with foul disease, reversed.**
7. **A treacherous villain on the scene appears;**
8. **Behead him, and we see the bygone years.**

VIPER

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | V | o | W |
| 2. | I | de | A |
| 3. | C | rus | T |
| 4. | T | im | E |
| 5. | O | rde | R |
| 6. | R | epe | L |
| 7. | I | ag | O |
| 8. | A | g | O |

NOTES.—Light 6. Leper. 7. Othello.

The correct answer to the second light of No. 147 was "Roger." No satisfactory alternatives were offered for any of the lights of this or the following acrostic.

THIRTIETH SERIES: RESULT.

The highest score possible was 32, and no competitor succeeded in obtaining this number, even though none of the lights remained unsolved. Dun, Forest, Mancu, and Reg scored 31; these four solvers win prizes of £2 10s. each. Iver, Nazrat, Perky, Wals, and Yagnit scored 30; these five solvers win prizes of half a guinea each. Dun, Forest, Mancu, Reg, and Wals must be now ineligible for prizes in the current (thirty-first) series—the first four as winners of major prizes, and the last as a winner of a minor prize in two consecutive series.

Dun is Mr. D. G. Robertson, Torrie, St. John's Road, Newbury, Berks; Forest is Mr. P. E. Herrick, 40, Arodene Road, S.W.2; Mancu is Mr. L. A. Jones, Asterley, Goldsmid Road, Tonbridge, Kent; Reg is Mr. H. Lees, 3, Campden House Chambers, W.8; Iver is Mr. A. Birch, 164, Broom Road, Teddington; Nazrat is Mr. J. Greaney, 7, Prestbury Road, E.; Perky is Mr. A. T. Hill, Incents, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted, Herts; Wals is Mr. W. Stradling, 3, Charlbury Road, Oxford; Yagnit is Mr. C. Tingay, 15, Cranbourne Road, Muswell Hill.

# The Land of Mist

OR

# THE QUEST OF EDWARD MALONE

By

# A. CONAN DOYLE

*ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY*

XIV.

## IN WHICH CHALLENGER MEETS A STRANGE COLLEAGUE.

PROFESSOR CHALLENGER was not a man who made friends easily. In order to be his friend you had also to be his dependent. He did not admit of equals. But as a patron he was superb. With his Jovian air, his colossal condescension, his amused smile, his general suggestion of the god descending to the mortal, he could be quite overpowering in his amiability. But he needed certain qualities in return. Stupidity disgusted him. Physical ugliness alienated him. Independence repulsed him. He coveted the man whom all the world would admire, but who in turn would admire the superman above him. Such a man was Dr. Ross Scotton, and for this reason he had been Challenger's favourite pupil.

And now he was sick unto death. Dr. Atkinson, of St. Mary's, who has already played some minor part in this record, was attending him, and his reports were increasingly depressing. The illness was that dread disease disseminated sclerosis, and Challenger was aware that Atkinson was no alarmist when he said that a cure was a most remote and unlikely possibility. It seemed a terrible instance of the unreasonable nature of things that a young man of science, capable before he reached his prime of two such works as "The Embryology of the Sympathetic Nervous System" and "The Fallacy of the Obsonic Index," should be dissolved into his chemical elements with no personal or spiritual residue whatever. And yet the Professor shrugged his huge shoulders, shook his massive head, and accepted the inevitable. Every fresh message was worse than the last, and finally there was an ominous silence. Challenger went down once to his young friend's lodging in Gower Street. It was a racking experience, and he did not repeat it. The muscular cramps which are characteristic of the complaint were tying the sufferer into knots, and he was biting his lips to shut down the screams which might have relieved his agony at the expense of his manhood. He seized his mentor by the hand as a drowning man seizes a plank.

"Is it really as you have said? Is there no hope beyond the six months of torture which I see lying before me? Can you with all your wisdom and knowledge see no spark of light or life in the dark shadow of eternal dissolution?"

"Face it, my boy, face it!" said Challenger. "Better to look facts in the face than to console oneself with fancies."

Then the lips parted and the long-pent scream burst forth. Challenger rose and rushed from the room.

But now an amazing development occurred. It began by the appearance of Miss Delicia Freeman.

One afternoon there came a knock at the door of the Victoria flat. The austere and taciturn Austin, looking out at the level of his eyes, perceived nothing at all. On

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glancing downwards, however, he was aware of a small lady, whose delicate face and bright bird-like eyes were turned upwards to his own.

"I want to see the Professor," said she, diving into her handbag for a card.

"Can't see you," said Austin.

"Oh, yes, he can," the small lady answered, serenely. There was not a newspaper office, a statesman's sanctum, or a political chancellery which had ever presented a barrier strong enough to hold her back where she believed that there was good work to be done.

"Can't see you," repeated Austin.

"Oh, but really I must, you know," said Miss Freeman, and made a sudden dive past the butler. With unerring instinct she made for the door of the sacred study, knocked, and forthwith entered.

THE lion head looked up from behind a table littered with papers. The lion eyes glared.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" the lion roared. The small lady was, however, entirely unabashed. She smiled sweetly at the glowering face.

"I am so glad to make your acquaintance," she said. "My name is Delicia Freeman."

"Austin!" shouted the Professor. The butler's impassive face appeared round the angle of the door. "What is this, Austin? How did this person get here?"

"I couldn't keep her out," wailed Austin. "Come, miss, we've had enough of it."

"No, no! You must not be angry—you really must not," said the lady, sweetly. "I was told that you were a perfectly terrible person, but really you are rather a dear."

"Who are you? What do you want? Are you aware that I am one of the most busy men in London?"

Miss Freeman fished about in her bag once more. She was always fishing in that bag, extracting sometimes a leaflet on Armenia, sometimes a pamphlet on Greece, sometimes a note on Zenana Missions, and sometimes a psychic manifesto. On this occasion it was a folded bit of writing-paper which emerged.

"From Dr. Ross Scotton," she said.

It was hastily folded and roughly scribbled—so roughly as to be hardly legible. Challenger bent his heavy brows over it.

*"Please, dear friend and guide, listen to what this lady says. I know it is against all your views. And yet I had to do it. You said yourself that I had no hope. I have tested it and it works. I know it seems wild and crazy. But any hope is better than no hope. If you were in my place you would have done the same. Will you not cast out prejudice and see for yourself? Dr. Felkin comes at three.* "J. Ross Scotton."

Challenger read it twice over and sighed. The brain was clearly involved in the lesion. "He says I am to listen to you. What is it? Cut it as short as you can."

"It's a spirit doctor," said the lady.

Challenger bounded in his chair.

"Good God, am I never to get away from this nonsense?" he cried. "Can they not let this poor devil lie quiet on his death-bed but they must play their tricks upon him?"

Miss Delicia clapped her hands and her quick little eyes twinkled with joy.

"It's *not* his death-bed. He is going to get well."

"Who said so?"

"Dr. Felkin. He never is wrong."

Challenger snorted.

"Have you seen him lately?" she asked.

"Not for some weeks."

"But you wouldn't recognize him. He is nearly cured."

"Cured! Cured of diffused sclerosis in a few weeks?"

"Come and see."

"You want me to aid and abet in some infernal quackery. The next thing, I should see my name on this rascal's testimonials. I know the breed. If I did come I should probably take him by the collar and throw him down the stair."

The lady laughed heartily.

"He would say with Aristides: 'Strike but hear me.' You will hear him first, however, I am sure. Your pupil is a real chip of yourself. He seems quite ashamed of getting well in such an unorthodox way. It was I who called Dr. Felkin in against his wish."

"Oh, you did, did you? You took a great deal upon yourself."

"I am prepared to take any responsibility, so long as I *know* I am right. I spoke to Dr. Atkinson. He knows a little of psychic matters. He is far less prejudiced than most of you scientific gentlemen. He took the view that when a man was dying in any case, it could matter little what you did. So Dr. Felkin came."

"And, pray, how did this quack doctor proceed to treat the case?"

"That is what Dr. Ross Scotton wants you to see." She looked at a watch which she dragged from the depths of the bag. "In an hour he will be there. I'll tell your friend you are coming. I am sure you would not disappoint him. Oh!" She dived into the bag again. "Here is a recent note upon the Bessarabian question. It is much more serious than people think. You will just have time to read it before

"He says I am to listen to you," said Challenger. "What is it? Cut it as short as you can."

you come. So good-bye, dear Professor, and *au revoir!*"

She beamed at the scowling lion and departed.

But she had succeeded in her mission, which was a way she had. There was something compelling in the absolutely unselfish enthusiasm of this small person who would, at a moment's notice, take on anyone from a Mormon elder to an Albanian brigand, loving the culprit and mourning the sin. Challenger came under the spell, and shortly after three he stumped his way up the narrow stair and blocked the door of the humble bedroom where his favourite pupil lay stricken. Ross Scotton lay stretched upon the bed in a red dressing-gown, and his teacher saw, with a start of surprised joy, that his face had filled out and that the light of life and hope had come back into his eyes.

"Yes, I'm beating it!" he cried. "Ever since Felkin held his first consultation with Atkinson I have felt the life force stealing back into me. Oh, chief, it is a fearful thing to lie awake at night and feel these cursed microbes nibbling away at the very roots of your life! I could almost hear them at it. And the cramps when my body—like a badly-articulated skeleton—would all get twisted into one rigid tangle! But now, except some dyspepsia and urticaria of the palms, I am free from pain. And all on account of this dear fellow here who has helped me."

He motioned with his hand as if alluding to someone present. Challenger looked round with a glare, expecting to find some

smug charlatan behind him. But no doctor was there. A frail young woman, who seemed to be a nurse, quiet, unobtrusive, and with a wealth of brown hair, was dozing in a corner. Miss Delicia, smiling demurely, stood in the window.

"I am glad you are better, my dear boy," said Challenger. "But do not tamper with your reason. Such a complaint has its natural systole and diastole."

"Talk to him, Dr. Felkin. Clear his mind for him," said the invalid.

Challenger looked up at the cornice and round at the skirting. His pupil was clearly addressing some doctor in the room and yet none was visible. Surely his aberration had not reached the point when he thought that actual floating apparitions were directing his cure.

"Indeed, it needs some clearing," said a deep and virile voice at his elbow. He bounded round. It was the frail young woman who was talking.

"Let me introduce you to Dr. Felkin," said Miss Delicia, with a mischievous laugh.

"What tomfoolery is this?" cried Challenger.

THE young woman rose and fumbled at the side of her dress. Then she made an impatient gesture with her hand.

"Time was, my dear colleague, when a snuff-box was as much part of my equipment as my phlebotomy case. I lived before the days of Laennec, and we carried no stethoscope, but we had our little chirurgical battery, none the less. But the snuff-box was a peace-offering, and I was about to offer it to you, but, alas! it has had its day."

Challenger stood with staring eyes and dilated nostrils while this speech was delivered. Then he turned to the bed.

"Do you mean to say that this is your doctor—that you take the advice of this person?"

The young girl drew herself up very stiffly.

"Sir, I will not bandy words with you. I perceive very clearly that you are one of those who have been so immersed in material knowledge that you have had no time to devote to the possibilities of the spirit."

"I certainly have no time for nonsense," said Challenger.

"My dear chief!" cried a voice from the bed. "I beg you to bear in mind how much Dr. Felkin has already done for me. You saw how I was a month ago, and you see how I am now. You would not offend my best friend."

"I certainly think, Professor, that you owe dear Dr. Felkin an apology," said Miss Delicia.

"A private lunatic asylum!" snorted Challenger. Then, playing up to his part, he assumed the ponderous elephantine irony which was one of his most effective weapons in dealing with recalcitrant students.

"Perhaps, young lady—or shall I say elderly and most venerable Professor?—you will permit a mere raw earthly student, who has no more knowledge than this world can give, to sit humbly in a corner and possibly to learn a little from your methods and your teaching." This speech was delivered with his shoulders up to his ears, his eyelids over his eyes, and his palms extended in front—an alarming statue of sarcasm. Dr. Felkin, however, was striding, with heavy and impatient steps, about the room and took little notice.

"Quite so! Quite so!" he said, carelessly. "Get into the corner and stay there. Above all, stop talking, as this case calls for all my faculties." He turned with a masterful air towards the patient. "Well, well, you are coming along. In two months you will be in the class-room."

"Oh, it is impossible!" cried Ross Scotton, with a half sob.

"Not so. I guarantee it. I do not make false promises."

"I'll answer for that," said Miss Delicia. "I say, dear doctor, do tell us who you were when you were alive."

"Tut! tut! The unchanging woman. They gossiped in my time and they gossip still. No, no! We will have a look at our young friend here. Pulse! The intermittent beat has gone. That is something gained. Temperature—obviously normal. Blood pressure—still higher than I like. Digestion—much to be desired. What you moderns call a hunger-strike would not be amiss. Well, the general conditions are tolerable. Let us see the local centre of the mischief. Pull your shirt down, sir! Lie on your face. Excellent!" She passed her fingers with great force and precision down the upper part of the spine, and then dug in her knuckles with a sudden force which made the sufferer yelp. "That is better! There is—as I have explained—a slight want of alignment in the cervical vertebræ which has, as I perceive it, the effect of lessening the foramina through which the nerve roots emerge. This has caused compression, and as these nerves are really the conductors of vital force, it has upset the whole equilibrium of the parts supplied. My eyes are the same as your clumsy X-rays, and I clearly perceive that the position is almost restored and the fatal constriction removed. I hope, sir," to Challenger, "that I make the pathology

of this interesting case intelligible to you?"

Challenger grunted his general hostility and disagreement.

"I will clear up any little difficulties which may linger in your mind. But, meantime, my dear lad, you are a credit to me and I rejoice in your progress. You will present my compliments to my colleague of earth—Dr. Atkinson—and tell him that I can suggest nothing more. The medium is a little weary, poor girl, so I will not remain longer to-day."

"But you said you would tell us who you were."

"Indeed, there is little to say. I was a very undistinguished practitioner. I sat under the great Abernethy in my youth and, perhaps, imbibed something of his methods. When I passed over in early middle age I continued my studies and was permitted, if I could find some suitable means of expression, to do something to help humanity. You understand, of course, that it is only by serving and self-abnegation that we advance in the higher world. This is my service, and I can only thank kind Fate that I was able to find in this girl a being whose vibrations so correspond with my own that I can easily assume control of her body."

"And where is she?" asked the patient.

"She is waiting beside me and will presently re-enter her own frame. As to you, sir," turning to Challenger, "you are a man of character and learning, but you are clearly embedded in that materialism which is the special curse of your age. Let me assure you that the medical profession, which is supreme upon earth for the disinterested work of its members, has yielded too much to the dogmatism of such men as you, and has unduly neglected that spiritual element in man which is far more important than your herbs and your minerals. There is a life-force, sir, and it is in the control of this life-force that the medicine of the future lies. If you shut your mind to it, it can only mean that the confidence of the public will turn to those who are ready to adopt every means of cure, whether they have the approval of your authorities or not."

NEVER could young Ross Scotton forget that scene. The Professor, the master, the supreme chief, he who had to be addressed with bated breath, sat with half-opened mouth and staring eyes, leaning forward in his chair, while in front of him the slight young woman, shaking her mop of brown hair and wagging an admonitory forefinger, spoke to him as a father speaks to a refractory child. So intense was her power that Challenger, for the instant, was constrained to accept the situation. He gasped and grunted, but no retort came to his lips. The girl turned away and sat down on a chair.

"He is going," said Miss Delicia.

"But not yet gone," replied the girl with a smile. "Yes, I must go, for I have much to do. This is not my only medium of expression, and I am due in Edinburgh in a few minutes. But be of good heart, young man. I will set my assistant with two extra batteries to increase your vitality so far as your system will permit. As to you, sir," to Challenger, "I would implore you to beware of the egotism of brain and the self-concentration of intellect. Store what is old, but be ever receptive to what is new, and judge it not as you may wish it, but as God has designed it."

She gave a deep sigh and sank back in her chair. There was a minute of dead silence while she lay with her head upon her breast. Then with another sigh and a shiver she opened a pair of very bewildered blue eyes.

"Well, has he been?" she asked in a gentle, feminine voice.

"Indeed, yes!" cried the patient. "He was great. He says I shall be in the classroom in two months."

"Splendid! Any directions for me?"

"Just the special message as before. But he is going to put on two new spirit batteries if I can stand it."

"My word, he won't be long now!" Suddenly the girl's eyes lit on Challenger and she stopped in confusion.

"This is Nurse Ursula," said Miss Delicia. "Nurse, let me present you to the famous Professor Challenger."

Challenger was great in his manner towards women, especially if the particular woman happened to be a young and pretty girl. He advanced now as Solomon may have advanced to the Queen of Sheba, took her hand, and patted her hair with patriarchal assurance.

"My dear, you are far too young and charming for such deceit. Have done with it for ever. Be content to be a bewitching nurse and resign all claim to the higher functions of doctor. Where, may I ask, did you pick up all this jargon about cervical vertebræ and posterior foramina?"

Nurse Ursula looked helplessly round as one who finds herself suddenly in the clutches of a gorilla.

"She does not understand a word you say!" cried the man on the bed. "Oh, chief, you must make an effort to face the real situation! I know what a readjustment it means. In my small way I have had

to undergo it myself. But, believe me, you see everything through a prism instead of through plate-glass until you understand the spiritual factor."

Challenger continued his paternal attentions, though the frightened lady had begun to shrink from him.

"Come now," said he, "who was the clever doctor with whom you acted as nurse—the man who taught you all these fine words? You must feel that it is hopeless to deceive me. You will be much happier, dear child, when you have made a clean breast of it all, and when we can laugh together over the lecture which you inflicted upon me."

An unexpected interruption came to check Challenger's exploration of the young woman's conscience or motives. The invalid was sitting up, a vivid red patch against his white pillows, and he was speaking with an energy which was in itself an indication of his coming cure.

"Professor Challenger!" he cried, "you are insulting my best friend. Under this roof at least she shall be safe from the sneers of scientific prejudice. I beg you to leave the room if you cannot address Nurse Ursula in a more respectful manner."

Challenger glared, but the peacemaking Delicia was at work in a moment.

"You are far too hasty, dear Dr. Ross Scotton!" she cried. "Professor Challenger has had no time to understand this. You were just as sceptical yourself at first. How can you blame him?"

"Yes, yes, that is true," said the young doctor. "It seemed to me to open the door to all the quackery in the universe—indeed it does, but the fact remains."

"'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see,'" quoted Miss Delicia. "Ah, Professor, you may raise your eyebrows and shrug your shoulders, but we've dropped something into your big mind this afternoon which will grow and grow until no man can see the end of it." She dived into the bag. "There is a little slip here—'Brain *versus* Soul.' I do hope, dear Professor, that you will read it and then pass it on."

## XV.

### IN WHICH TRAPS ARE LAID FOR A GREAT QUARRY.

MALONE was bound in honour not to speak of love to Enid Challenger, but looks can speak, and so their communications had not broken down completely. In all other ways he adhered closely to the agreement, though the situation was a difficult one. It was the more difficult since he was a constant visitor to the Professor, and, now that the irritation of the debate was over, a very welcome one. The one object of Malone's life was to get the great man's sympathetic consideration of those psychic subjects which had gained such a hold upon himself. This he pursued with assiduity, but also with great caution, for he knew that the lava was thin and that a fiery explosion was always possible. Once or twice it came, and caused Malone to drop the subject for a week or two until the ground seemed a little more firm.

Malone developed a remarkable cunning in his approaches. One favourite device was to consult Challenger upon some scientific point on the zoological importance of the Straits of Banda, for example, and lead him on until Challenger in due course would explain that our knowledge on the point was due to Alfred Russel Wallace. "Oh, really! To Wallace the Spiritualist!" Malone would say in an innocent voice, on which Challenger would glare and change the topic.

Sometimes it was Lodge that Malone would use as a trap. "I suppose you think highly of him?"

"The first brain in Europe," said Challenger.

"He is the greatest authority on ether, is he not?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Of course, I only know him by his psychic works."

Challenger would shut up like a clam. Then Malone would wait a few days and remark casually: "Have you ever met Lombroso?"

"Yes, at the Congress at Milan."

"I have been reading a book of his."

"Criminology, I presume?"

"No; it was called 'After Death—What?'"

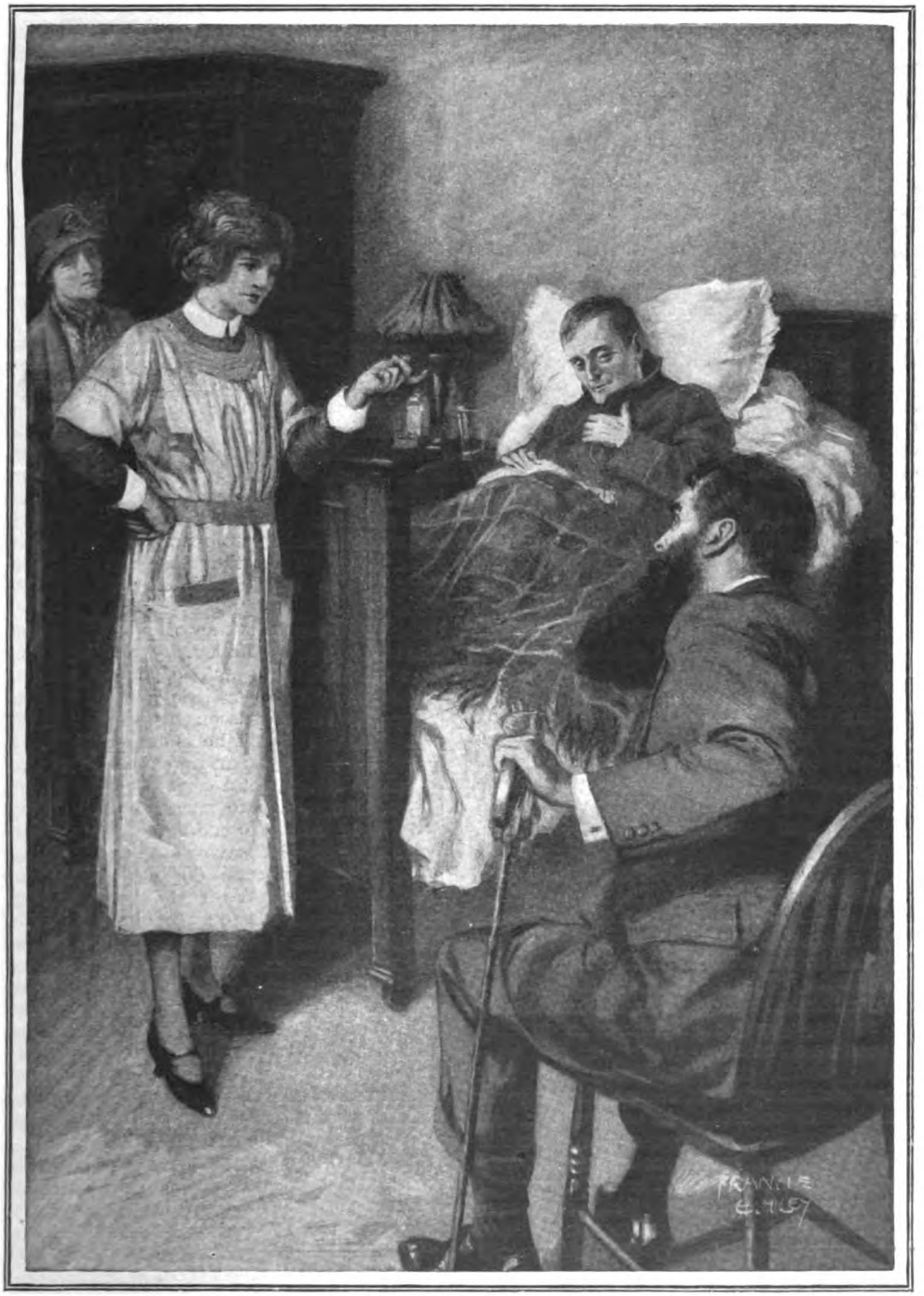
"I have not heard of it."

"It discusses the psychic question."

"Ah, a man of Lombroso's penetrating brain would make short work of the fallacies of these charlatans."

"No; it is written to support them."

"Well, even the greatest mind has its inexplicable weakness." Thus with infinite patience and cunning did Malone drop his little drops of reason in the hope of slowly wearing away the casing of prejudice, but no very visible effects could be seen. Some stronger measure must be adopted, and



Wagging an admonitory forefinger, she spoke to him as a father speaks to a refractory child. Challenger gasped and grunted, but no retort came to his lips.

Malone determined upon direct demonstration. But how, when, and where? Those were the all-important points upon which he determined to consult Algernon Mailey. One spring afternoon found him back in that drawing-room where he had once rolled upon the carpet in the embrace of Silas Linden. He found the Rev. Charles Mason and Smith, the hero of the Albert Hall debate, in deep consultation with Mailey upon a subject which may seem much more important to our descendants than those topics which now bulk large in the eyes of the public. It was no less than whether the psychic movement in Britain was destined to take a Unitarian or a Trinitarian course. Smith had always been in favour of the former, as had the old leaders of the movement and the present organized Spiritualist churches. On the other hand, Charles Mason was a loyal son of the Anglican church, and was the spokesman of a host of others, including such weighty names as Lodge and Barrett among laymen, or Wilberforce, Haweis, Chambers, and Vale Owen among the clergy, who clung fast to the old teachings while admitting the fact of spirit communication. Mailey stood between the two parties, and, like the zealous referee in a boxing-match who separates the two combatants, he always took a chance of getting a knock from each.

It was with some difficulty that Malone got the conversation round to that which had been the particular object of his visit. He could have found no group of men more fit to advise him, and all were equally keen that so great a man as Challenger should have the best available.

WHERE should it be? On that they were unanimous. The large séance room of the Psychic College was the most select, the most comfortable, in every way the best appointed in London. When should it be? The sooner the better. Every Spiritualist and every medium would surely put any engagement aside in order to help on such an occasion.

Who should the medium be? Ah! There was the rub. Of course, the Bolsover circle would be ideal. It was private and unpaid, but Bolsover was a man of quick temper and Challenger was sure to be very insulting and annoying. The meeting might end in riot and fiasco. Such a chance should not be taken. Was it worth while to take him over to Paris? But who would take the responsibility of letting loose such a bull in Dr. Maupuis' china shop?

"He would probably seize pithecanthropus by the throat and risk every life in the room," said Mailey. "No, no, it would never do."

"There is no doubt that Banderby is the strongest physical medium in England," said Smith. "But we all know what his personal character is. You could not rely upon him."

"Why not?" asked Malone. "What's the matter with him?"

Smith raised his hand to his lips.

"He has gone the way that many a medium has gone before him."

"But surely," said Malone, "that is a strong argument against our cause. How can a thing be good if it leads to such a result?"

"Do you consider poetry to be good?"

"Why, of course I do!"

"Yet Poe was a drunkard, and Coleridge an addict, and Byron a rake, and Verlaine a degenerate. You have to separate the man from the thing. The genius has to pay a ransom for his genius in the instability of his temperament. A great medium is even more sensitive than a genius. Many are beautiful in their lives. Some are not. The excuse for them is great. They practise a most exhausting profession and stimulants are needed. Then they lose control. But their physical mediumship carries on all the same."

"Which reminds me of a story about Banderby," said Mailey. "Perhaps you have not seen him, Malone. He is a funny figure at any time—a little round bouncing man who has not seen his own toes for years. When drunk he is funnier still. A few weeks ago I got an urgent message that he was in the bar of a certain hotel and too far gone to get home unassisted. A friend and I set forth to rescue him. We got him home after some unsavoury adventures, and what would the man do but insist upon holding a séance. We tried to restrain him, but the trumpet was on a side-table, and he suddenly switched off the light. In an instant the phenomena began. Never were they more powerful. But they were interrupted by Princeps, his control, who seized the trumpet and began belabouring him with it. "You rascal! You drunken rascal! How dare you! How dare you!" The trumpet was all dinted with the blows. Banderby ran bellowing out of the room, and we took our departure."

"Well, it wasn't the medium that time, at any rate," said Mason. "But about Professor Challenger—it would never do to risk the chance."

"What about Tom Linden?" asked Mrs. Mailey, who had joined them at tea.

Mailey shook his head.

"Tom has never been quite the same since his imprisonment. These fools not only persecute our precious mediums, but they ruin their powers. It is like putting a

razor into a damp place and then expecting it to have a fine edge."

"What! Has he lost his powers?"

"Well, I would not go so far as that. But they are not so good as they were. He sees a disguised policeman in every sitter and it distracts him. Still, he is dependable so far as he goes. Yes, on the whole we had better have Tom."

"And the sitters?"

"I expect Professor Challenger may wish to bring a friend or two of his own."

"They will form a horrible block of vibrations. We must have some of our own sympathetic people to counteract it. There is Delicia Freeman. She would come. I would come myself. You would come, Mason?"

"Of course I would."

"And you, Smith?"

"No, no! I have my paper to look after, three services, two burials, one marriage, and five meetings, all next week."

"Well, we can easily get one or two more. Eight is Linden's favourite number. So now, Malone, you have only to get the great man's consent and the date."

"And the spirit confirmation," said Mason, seriously. "We must take our partners into consultation."

"Of course we must, padre. That is the right note to strike. Well, that's settled, Malone, and we can only await the event."

As it chanced, a very different event was awaiting Malone that evening, and he came upon one of those chasms which unexpectedly open across the path of life. When, in his ordinary routine, he reached the office of the *Gazette*, he was informed by the commissionaire that Mr. Beaumont desired to see him. Malone's immediate superior was the old Scotch sub-editor, Mr. McArdle, and it was rare indeed for the supreme editor to cast a glimpse down from that peak whence he surveyed the kingdoms of the world, or to show any cognizance of his humble fellow-workers upon the slopes beneath him. The great man, clean-shaven, prosperous, and capable, sat in his palatial sanctum amid a rich assortment of old oak furniture and sealing-wax-red leather. He continued his letter when Malone entered, and only raised his shrewd grey eyes after some minutes' interval.

"Ah, Mr. Malone, good evening! I have wanted to see you for some little time. Won't you sit down? It is in reference to these articles on psychic matters which you have been writing. You opened them in a tone of healthy scepticism, tempered by humour, which was very acceptable both to me and to our public. I regret, however, to observe that your view changed as you proceeded, and that you have now assumed a position in which you really seem to condone some of these practices. That, I need not say, is not the policy of the *Gazette*, and we should have discontinued the articles had it not been that we had announced a series by an impartial investigator. We have had to continue, but the tone must change."

"What do you wish me to do, sir?"

"You must get the funny side of it again. That is what our public loves. Poke fun at it all. Call up the maiden aunt and make her talk in an amusing fashion. You grasp my meaning?"

"I am afraid, sir, it has ceased to seem funny in my eyes. On the contrary, I take it more and more seriously."

Beaumont shook his solemn head.

"So, unfortunately, do our subscribers." He had a small pile of letters upon the desk beside him, and he took one up.

"Look at this. 'I had always regarded your paper as a God-fearing publication, and I would remind you that such practices as your correspondent seems to condone are expressly forbidden both in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. I should share your sin if I continued to be a subscriber.'"

"Bigoted ass!" muttered Malone.

"So he may be, but the penny of a bigoted ass is as good as any other penny. Here is another letter: 'Surely in this age of free thought and enlightenment you are not helping a movement which tries to lead us back to the exploded idea of angelic and diabolic intelligences outside ourselves? If so, I must ask you to cancel my subscription.'"

"It would be amusing, sir, to shut these various objectors up in a room and let them settle it among themselves."

"That may be, Mr. Malone, but what I have to consider is the circulation of the *Gazette*."

"Don't you think, sir, that possibly you underrate the intelligence of the public, and that behind these extremists of various sorts there is a vast body of people who have been impressed by the utterances of so many great and honourable witnesses? Is it not our duty to keep these people abreast of the real facts without making fun of them?"

Mr. Beaumont shrugged his shoulders.

"The Spiritualists must fight their own battle. This is not a propaganda newspaper, and we make no pretence to lead the public on religious beliefs."

"No, no; I only meant as to the actual facts. Look how systematically they are kept in the dark. When, for example, did

"This marks the end of my connection with your paper," said Malone. "I have a six months' contract. When it ends, I go!" "Please yourself, Mr. Malone," said Mr. Beaumont, and went on with his writing.

one ever read an intelligent article upon ectoplasm in any London paper? Who would imagine that this all-important substance has been examined and described and endorsed by scores of men of science, with innumerable photographs to prove their words?"

"Well, well," said Beaumont, impatiently. "I am afraid I am too busy to argue the question. The point of this interview is that I have had a letter from Mr. Cornelius to say that we must at once take another line."

Mr. Cornelius was the owner of the *Gazette*, having become so not from any personal merit, but because his father left him some millions, part of which he expended upon this purchase. He seldom was seen in the office himself, but occasionally a paragraph in the paper recorded that his yacht had touched at Mentone and that he had been seen at the Monte Carlo tables, or that he was expected in Leicestershire for the season. He was a man of no force of brain or character, though occasionally he swayed public affairs by a manifesto printed in larger type upon his own front page. Without being dissolute, he was a free liver, living in a constant luxury which placed him always on the edge of vice and occasionally over the border. Malone's hot blood flushed to his head as he thought of

this trifler, this insect, coming between mankind and a message of instruction and consolation descending from above. And yet those clumsy, childish fingers could actually turn the tap and cut off the divine stream, however much it might break through in other quarters.

"So that is final, Mr. Malone," said Beaumont, with the manner of one who ends an argument.

"Quite final," said Malone. "So final that it marks the end of my connection with your paper. I have a six months' contract. When it ends, I go!"

"Please yourself, Mr. Malone." Mr. Beaumont went on with his writing.

Malone, with the flush of battle still upon him, went into McArdle's room and told him what had happened. The old Scotch sub-editor was very perturbed.

"Eh, man, it's that Irish blood of yours. A drop o' Scotch is a good thing, either in your veins or at the bottom o' a glass. Go back, man, and say you have reconseedered."

"Not I! The idea of this man Cornelius, with his pot-belly and red face, and—well, you know all about his private life—the idea of such a man dictating what folk are to believe, and asking me to make fun of the holiest thing on this earth!"

"Man, you'll be ruined!"

"Well, better men than I have been ruined over this cause. But I'll get another job."

"Not if Cornelius can stop you. If you get the name of an insubordinate dog there is no place for you in Fleet Street."

"It's a damned shame!" cried Malone. "The way this thing has been treated is a disgrace to journalism. It's not Britain alone. America is worse. We seem to have the lowest, most soulless folk that ever lived on the Press—good-hearted fellows, too, but material to a man. And these are the leaders of the people! It's awful!"

McArdle put a fatherly hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"Weel, weel, lad, we take the world as we find it. We didn't make it and we're no reesponsible. Give it time! Give it time! We're a' in such a hurry. Gang hame now, think it over, remember your career, that young leddy of yours, and then come back and eat the old pie that all of us have to eat if we are to keep our places in the world."

(*To be concluded.*)

# Beware of Pickpockets!

By

## F.G.L.FAIRLIE

*ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE*

The little pickpocket shot through the gates and round the corner like a rabbit.

I TOOK my place in the queue. Peter, as was his wont, stood aside and, lighting a cigarette, watched my slow progress towards the booking-office. A large woman, carrying a large basket, found some difficulty in finding the wherewithal necessary for the purchase of her ticket, but at last my turn came.

"Two to Dover Street."

"I think," said Peter, over my shoulder, "I would rather go to the Mansion House."

The booking-clerk stared at him. Somebody behind me tittered.

"It sounds so grand," Peter continued, turning to the waiting queue with a bland smile.

The middle-aged lady just behind me recoiled slightly, stepping heavily on to the toes of the man next to her and causing him to emit a minor oath and jump violently, to the consternation of all those in the rear. In the ensuing confusion I piloted my absurd cousin rapidly towards the lift. By the grace of Heaven it was already practically full, and we were descending towards the Tube level before the surprised and slightly-annoyed individuals behind had had time to purchase their tickets and advance upon us.

It was about ten o'clock of a fine winter's morning, and Peter and I had decided over our bacon and eggs that the international match at Twickenham would be well worth the watching. Unfortunately, this decision, which should have been arrived at some weeks previously, left us in the position of being without seats on the very morning of the match, and we had decided that our only

hope lay in an early visit to the agent in Bond Street, entrusted by the Rugby Union with the disposal of the tickets. Accordingly, Peter and I had ventured forth, disdaining the importunity of a passing taxi in favour of the slightly quicker and very much cheaper Tube.

Peter behaved himself with admirable restraint during our journey, and we were soon being taken up to the street-level again in the lift at Dover Street. The lift was fairly full, but the back view of an extremely well-dressed girl near the other gate arrested my attention. She was wearing a very smart little red hat, and was clothed in a blue coat and skirt with an expensive fur thrown loosely round her slim shoulders. Hanging from her left wrist, a small bag was dangling open and invitingly.

Just on her left side an undersized and ill-kempt little individual was standing. I saw his hand moving up towards the bag. His intention was perfectly obvious, but for one moment I couldn't say anything. His hand was moving so stealthily, but also steadily, that it held me mesmerized. He touched the bag, and I think that must have woke me up. With a shout of " Thief ! " I pushed violently against the man in front of me. Everyone looked round at once, and one girl screamed. But my hesitation had been my undoing, for at that moment we reached the top and the gates folded back. The little pickpocket shot through them and round the corner like a rabbit. A few words of explanation were necessary before the crowd moved on. I reached the girl's side, closely followed by Peter, but fortunately the thief had not had time to achieve his purpose. The girl examined her bag and reported all present, but while she did so I was able to take stock of her. She was one of those bewitching creatures with very delicate features, perfectly proportioned, and possessing an absolutely straight little nose.

Peter was visibly impressed.

" Madam," he said, " but for this poor boob, into whose family I married, you would undoubtedly have been relieved of many treasured heirlooms. I must therefore request you to thank me prettily for having brought him into this lift at the right time."

The girl looked at him with a puzzled frown on her pretty face. Then a mischievous light appeared in two very blue eyes, and a small dimple took the stage on the off side.

" If it had been you," she said, " I should have been in two minds about giving a tip."

It was a good hit, and I roared with laughter. Peter never hesitated.

" Ungrateful being ! " he said, lifting his eyes in mock horror. " Typical of your sex, that's what you are. Shall I meditate on the wickedness of woman in yonder tavern, or throw a faint here ? "

We both laughed at that. Then the girl turned to me.

" Thank you very much," she said. " I must really go and have the catch mended. Then I sha'n't be quite such easy prey ! "

She smiled sweetly, and turned down the street towards Piccadilly.

Peter and I were exceptionally lucky. We obtained two excellent seats in the West Stand which had just been returned. All the available accommodation had been disposed of weeks beforehand.

We decided to make the return journey as we had come. Just as we were descending again into the bowels of the earth, Peter's voice just behind me broke out with startling effect.

" Papa ! " he said, " what's a pick-pocket ? "

Hurriedly I handed him one of the two tickets I had just bought.

" Make your own way home," I said, shortly.

IT was Peter's fault, and not mine. As we were accompanying the crowd through the gates of the ground, he caught sight of an old war friend whom he had last seen in Flanders. Making off rapidly towards the bowler which he had marked down as soon as he could disentangle himself, he shouted out instructions not to wait for him, which were wholly superfluous, and suggested my leaving his ticket with the official at the entrance to our stand, which was not a bad idea considering that the speed with which he left me had precluded all possibility of my getting his ticket from my pocket in time for him to take it. I made my way leisurely towards the stand, there being still a good twenty minutes before the advertised time for starting.

A motley crowd had come to see this battle between Wales and England. The rose was much in evidence, but so was the leek; choirs of male voices were chanting encouragement to the wearers of the red jersey, but not with wholly musical effect. Everyone was happy all around, everyone discussing the chances of the rival sides, the composition of the teams.

I had not gone twenty paces when I saw the lady of the bag. She was standing alone about ten paces in front of me, and looking around rather helplessly. I gathered that she had lost her cavalier.

Coming up to her, I took off my hat.

" Protection," I said, " would appear to be my perquisite. May I surround you

with a cloak of words, or would you rather I helped you to find him?"

For a moment she looked at me coldly, without a hint of recognition. Then suddenly she smiled.

"Why," she said, "it's the lift man!"

"At your service," I replied. "The description applies to me, although not the profession. Have you lost your husband?"

"I have permanently mislaid him, until find one."

I heaved a sigh of relief.

"Your *fiancé*?"

"I haven't got one."

"In that case, my lady," I smiled at her, "at least I have a fair start. Tell me, why all alone?"

"I don't know why I should tell you," she said, looking quite adorable with a slightly perplexed expression; "but still, the fact is that I've come down here to see Wales win, and I haven't an idea how to get to my seat."

"You could ask," I suggested, "but I suppose that would be unromantic. Let me see the ticket."

She handed me her ticket, which proved to be one in the North Stand.

"It's over there," I said, "in the North Stand, that new one. But are you all alone?"

"Why not?" she challenged.

"Because, my dear, such unalloyed beauty is rare, and, being rare, attracts. And there are a lot of nasty big men about."

Suddenly an idea struck me.

"Will you give me your ticket," I asked, "if I give you another, next to me?"

For a moment she hesitated. Then she looked at me squarely. I met her eyes without flinching.

"Thank you," she said.

"My dear," I smiled at her, "this date will be underlined in red ink in my diary. I mean it. I think I shall have to take seriously to Protection as a profession. It's a pity they've dropped it from the Conservative programme, for I am sure there would have been a great Parliamentary career for me. Come along."

I left the North Stand ticket and half a crown with the official at the entrance, and gave Peter's name. Then we advanced up the stairs and took our seats.

I was delighted with my fair companion, for she not only refrained from asking essentially feminine questions relating to the rules, but quite obviously was well acquainted with the game. It was not a great match, but it was close enough, and gave us plenty of moments of excitement. Once, in the last few minutes of the game, when Wales came very near scoring what would have been the deciding try of the match, turning a two-points defeat into a one-point victory, my lady seized my arm in her excitement. When the moment passed she realized her action, and quickly withdrew her hand.

"If you must," I said, "I suppose you must. But don't if you haven't to."

I watched the colour stealing into her face, and noticed that her throat was as pretty as her features. But she merely laughed.

"Pay attention to the game," she said.

We got out very quickly, as our seats were next to the gangway, and made our way out of the gates with the crowd.

"How are you going back?" I asked.

She looked at me and smiled.

"The same way as I came."

"But, my dear, you're not going to turn me away now, are you?"

"Listen," she said. "You've been very sweet to me, and thank you very much. But I'm not going to be any more of a nuisance."

"A nuisance? My dear, without you the match would have been dreadfully dull."

"Oh, dear! why do men pester me so?"

I took off my hat.

"I beg your pardon," I said, very seriously. "I'm very sorry. Apparently I am the nuisance! Good-bye."

I turned to go, but in an instant she was at my side.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" she said. "Please don't go away like that. I didn't really mean it. I only said it because—oh, I don't know why! Thank you very, very much for being so nice to me."

I took her hand.

"Please!" I said. "I do understand, really. I was just a bit piqued, that's all. Give me your name, and let me call on you!"

A queer little smile spread over her face.

"I—I'd rather not," she said, "but you can take me out to lunch, if you like."

I gave the hand a little squeeze.

"When? To-morrow?"

"Very well."

"At the Berkeley at one o'clock?"

For a moment she hesitated.

"Yes," she said. I felt the tiniest answering pressure on my fingers. Then the crowd had swallowed her up.

I met Peter at the car. He was sitting at the wheel, waiting.

"Hullo!" he said, cheerily. "You get an excellent view from the North Stand. A trifle cold, of course, but then one is a little nearer the pole. By the way, who did you pick up?"

I laughed.

"You'll never guess."

"Possibly not," he replied, letting in the

clutch and edging into the stream of cars at the expense of a large Daimler. "I don't intend to try. Knowing you as I do, she might have been anyone from the stand-off half's best girl to the full-back's daughter. The johnny at the gate, however, was in no two minds about her looks. 'Pretty, sir?' he said. 'Why, she was a fair beauty. Made him look a great hulking brute by comparison, in a manner of speaking.'"

"Shut up!" I broke in. "As a matter of fact, she was the girl of the lift."

"No," said Peter, "I can't bear it! Do you mean to say I was sitting in the seat reserved for our pickpocketed lady?"

"I do."

"No wonder," said Peter, with a deep sigh.

"No wonder what?"

"Oh, nothing. No wonder I was, that's all."

We got into London very quickly. As Peter brought the car to a standstill in front of the house, he turned to me.

"Thirty-five minutes from gate to door. Not bad, what?"

"Rot!" I answered. "We can't have done it in that time. We didn't leave the ground until a quarter to five, and it's now——"

I had been feeling for my watch as I was speaking. Suddenly I unbuttoned my coat with feverish haste. But my fingers had told me right; the watch was gone.

"Hell!" I said, simply.

"Stolen?"

"Yes."

Peter broke out into uncontrolled mirth.

"You shouldn't be a spoil-sport, old man. They're bound to get their own back on you!"

I SPENT the next morning following up the telephone messages which I had sent to the Twickenham police and the authorities in London the night before. I saw quite a number of inspectors before lunch-time arrived. They were all appropriately sympathetic, but not very hopeful. At all events, I was assured of an accurate description being circulated, and I could do no more than that. I was particularly sorry to lose the watch, as it had been my father's, and was more or less an heirloom in the family.

I arrived at the Berkeley at a few minutes to one. I left my hat and coat, and sat down to wait for my lady. At two minutes to one Delphine and Peter arrived. Delphine is my cousin and Peter's wife. She is one of the most lovely girls that I have ever seen, and Peter is justly proud of his possession.

"Couldn't stop her," said Peter, as soon as he saw me. "Sorry, but she simply would come. Running me into an enormous outlay merely to satisfy her feminine curiosity."

"I simply had to see her," laughed Delphine. "But we won't interfere, old man. We'll go into a far corner, and I promise you I'll turn my back as soon as I've had one good look at her face. You see, I've had a bet with Peter that she's not so pretty as Joan Graham."

"She's the sole judge," said Peter, looking at his wife, "so I might as well pay now."

Delphine waved her hand to me happily, and led her husband into the restaurant. She was not a minute too soon, for my companion of the match entered the lounge just as Peter disappeared through the avenue of bowing waiters. My cousin was well known at the hotel.

I got up and took her hand.

"Punctuality," I said, "is an asset usually found only in the male species. May I be allowed to congratulate you?"

She laughed.

"You know," I continued, "I only half expected you would come."

"Why?"

"After what you said yesterday."

"Oh, I'm so sorry about that," she said, a little frown clouding her face. "I—I wanted to go back alone. I know it sounds ungrateful and stupid—only—well, girls are sometimes like that!"

"At all events, you've come now, and that's the great point. By the way, before we go in, I want to tell you that I'm going to call you Pixie. It's just as well that you should know your name."

"Pixie?"

"Yes, Pixie. It reminds me of the lift episode, and since you won't tell me your name, I've got to improvise."

"All right, Jack."

"How did you know?"

"I didn't. Is that your name?"

"As a matter of fact," I said, "it isn't. Shall we go in?"

I had reserved a table. As I followed the girl into the restaurant I looked around for my cousins. They were in the far corner, but I could see Delphine's eyes fixed on my companion in a critical stare. I smiled at Peter.

We sat down, and I noticed with pleasure that the girl was attracting a considerable amount of attention. She certainly did look very lovely. All that could be seen of her hair under a small hat, covering her ears on each side, was very fair; her eyes were blue, and her delicate features were admirably set off by a perfect skin and a natural complexion. She was dressed in the height of fashion, and her hands were slender and

well tended She provided, in fact, a most refined and pleasurable spectacle. I congratulated myself on being there as her host.

I had reserved a table. As I followed around for

"You know," I said, "you really shouldn't go about like yesterday. It isn't safe."

"Ooh!" she smiled. "What might happen?"

"Seriously, all sorts of things. It's all very well for other girls, but you——"

She laughed at me.

"In any case," I finished, rather lamely, "it isn't fair."

"Fair?"

"My dear, your beauty is too fragile. And if men see you wandering about alone they might be silly and want to look after you."

"I can look after myself."

"Of course," I said. "But, you see, if you show them you can, it upsets them, poor things. It upsets me. Mere man feels that his last prerogative, that of protecting woman, has gone. He daren't even give up his seat in a bus now, for fear of a rebuff. By the way, I lost my watch yesterday."

She looked up quickly.

"Lost it?"

"Well," I said, "it was stolen. Some time at the match, I think. I certainly had it going down to Twickenham."

"You poor thing," she said; "just after

preventing my bag being rifled, too. What rotten luck!"

I laughed.

"Oh, well," I said, "I suppose one oughtn't to take valuable watches into crowds. But it was an old one belonging to my father, so I'm very sorry."

"Sometimes."

"Well, I feel that you will get that watch back."

I smiled at her.

"Thank you," I said. "Now I'm sure that I shall. Have some more of something, will you?"

the girl into the restaurant I looked my cousins.

"Perhaps you'll get it back. Have you made any effort?"

"Any effort! My dear girl, I've been wandering from Scotland Yard to Twickenham police-station all the morning! But they are not very hopeful."

She looked at me with a funny little smile.

"Do you believe in premonitions?"

She shook her head.

"Well, coffee?"

"Yes, I should like that."

I ordered coffee, and, taking out my cigarette-case, offered her one.

"I'm afraid I don't smoke," she said.

I lit my own and leant back.

"A good lunch," I said, "sometimes goes to a man's head. This one has certainly gone to mine. I believe I know where to find two stalls for the Palace to-morrow night. They are quite nice seats. Would you care to occupy one?"

"And you the other?"

"That depends on you."

She hesitated.

"I don't want to appear ungrateful," she said. "I do realize how awfully nice you've been to me. But I don't think I ought to, you know."

I laughed at her.

"You're quite safe with me, my dear."

"It's not that," she said. "You know, you might not want to take me in a week's time, or even less, if you knew me better."

"Well," I suggested, "you can at least give me the chance to know you better."

"I promise I'll do that," she smiled, "but I can't come with you to-morrow."

The end of my little party drew very near. I took her out to the lounge for a few moments, but suddenly she started pulling on her gloves.

"Must you?"

She laughed.

"I'm afraid so. It's fearfully late. Will you order a taxi?"

I got up and did so. Then I waited for her by the screen which closes one corner of the lounge. I knew from experience the tactical value of the position.

Presently she came, looking very sweet. I took her hand.

"My dear," I said, "when can I see you again?"

She looked at me. A curious, half-wistful, half-mischievous expression seemed to be in her eyes; then, looking round quickly, she realized that we were concealed from all but an empty corner of the room. Suddenly she put her hand up to my shoulder and kissed me. "Whenever you like," she said, "if you really want to."

In a flash she was across the room and out of the doors. I was just in time to see her taxi gather speed down Piccadilly.

Rather surprised, I went back into the lounge and joined Delphine and Peter, who had just come out of the restaurant.

"A most unfortunate thing happened," said Peter. "Delphine asked me what I thought of her and I said 'Peach.' In two minutes the largest and most expensive-looking fruit I have ever seen was brought to me. We were only at the meat stage, too!"

"Shut up, you fool," laughed his wife. "I've lost my bet, old man. She looked a perfect angel. Did you——"

Delphine stopped abruptly. She was staring at my waistcoat. I followed the direction of her eyes.

There, lying in its accustomed place between the two pockets, was my watch-chain. Dazedly I pulled at it. My watch was duly attached to the end, but through the ring a small piece of paper was protruding.

Peter snatched it from me and rapidly unfolded it. Over his shoulder I read:—

"One good turn deserves another. Thank you about the bag. I don't usually deal in small affairs like watches, but, my dear man, you really mustn't flirt with every girl you meet!"

"Well, I'm damned!" said Peter, which summed it up pretty well, I thought.

"I thought she looked dishonest," said Delphine.

## "BUTTERCUP DAY."

**Referring to Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's story "Buttercup Day," appearing in our Christmas Number, we have received a letter from the Secretary of the Royal National Orthopædic Hospital, 234, Great Portland Street, London, W.1, reminding us that the Orthopædic Hospital holds a Buttercup Day every year, and expressing the fear that Mr. Wodehouse's amusing and satirical story of "Buttercup Day" may prejudicially affect future efforts in support of this most excellent charity. We are confident that this fear is groundless, and that none of our readers could associate the Buttercup Day in the story with the admirably-arranged Buttercup Day of the Orthopædic Hospital, but we gladly give publicity to the matter in order to put it beyond possibility of doubt. We ourselves happen to be supporters of this admirable charity, which we heartily commend to those interested in the welfare of crippled children.**

# Touch and Go

By

## "SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)

*ILLUSTRATED BY H. FORSTER*

THE fair-haired man in the corner had taken no part in the conversation. He made the fifth of the group that had gathered itself together in the corner of the smoking-room, and I don't think any of us even knew his name. He had come on board the day before at Marseilles with his wife, and it was she who had attracted my attention at dinner to such an extent that I had remarked on her to Sturgis of the Gunners, who was sitting next me.

A pretty woman—extremely pretty, and judging by her face somewhere about thirty. Certainly not more, for there was not a wrinkle to be seen, and her arms and neck were those of a young woman. It was her hair that surprised one, and made one wonder if the age estimate was wrong. For though there was a lot of it, it was snow white.

"Some newfangled fashion," grunted Sturgis in answer to my comment. "Next year it will be pea-green. I'll bet you that woman is not out of the twenties yet."

But somehow she didn't look in the least the type who go in for freak fancies of that sort. And her husband seemed to be the last man in the world who would marry one of the type. A more prosaic, matter-of-fact-looking Englishman I have seldom seen, and he was quiet to the point of dullness.

It was his first trip out East, we gathered, whereas we calculated that between the rest of us we had just topped the half-century. Which quite possibly accounted for his silence: we were talking of seas and places that, to him, were merely names out of an atlas. And also, as the evening grew older and tongues grew looser, some pretty tall stories began to fly around. Some were perfectly true; some—— However, I will not labour the point.

I forget who it was who first started the discussion on tight corners, and terrifying experiences generally. Cartwright spun a fairly useful one about three days in the company of some Chinese pirates waiting for a ransom he knew would never come; Sturgis specialized on a singularly unpleasant sect of priests somewhere up in Tibet. In fact, none of us disgraced ourselves, and I think we all had a comfortable feeling that our fair-haired friend was suitably impressed with the perils that lay in wait for the unwary.

"Of course," said Cartwright, reassuringly, "it's only when you get off the beaten track that there's any danger. Otherwise you're as safe as you are in England."

The fair-haired man smiled a little thoughtfully.

"What age would you put my wife at, gentlemen?" was his somewhat astounding remark.

"Well, really," said Sturgis, after a slightly embarrassed silence, "I—er——"

"I think you noticed her at dinner," went on the other, quietly. "And I have a reason for my apparently strange question."

"Twenty-five," I said, determined to err on the right side.

"My wife will be twenty next July," he answered. "And seven months ago, when she was just nineteen, her hair was as dark as yours. Not illness, gentlemen: nothing of that sort. But when you made use of the phrase 'as safe as you are in England,' I couldn't help thinking of that change of colour."

"You mean she had some terrible shock?" said someone.

"Nothing to compare, of course, with that sect of priests in Tibet," he answered mildly, and Sturgis became engrossed in the bowl of his pipe. "Yes, she had a terrible shock."

"Which turned her hair white?" Cartwright looked at him with interest. "I've heard of such cases second-hand, but—— Is it a matter which you can pass on, sir?"

The fair-haired man was silent for a moment or two.

"Well, gentlemen," he said at length, "you will understand that it's not a thing

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which I care to talk about as a general rule. But on the condition that it goes no farther, and above all on the condition that no allusion should ever be made to it in front of my wife, I have no objection to telling you what happened.

"You will understand, of course, that much of it has been pieced together by me from what she told me after it happened: I was not there at the time. If I had been——"

His fists clenched suddenly, and a strained look came into his eyes.

"We had been married three months when it took place. Our honeymoon was over—I couldn't afford the time for a very long one—and we were settling into the house I had managed to get not far from Sunningdale.

"It was a nice little house—ten bedrooms sort of size, with a well-laid-out garden and about a couple of acres of rough ground in which my predecessor had planted a whole lot of prize rhododendrons. It had a tennis court and a garage, and the marvel to me was that it hadn't been snapped up the instant it came on the market. We found it by mere chance when we were motoring to look at another place, and the instant we saw it we knew that it would do us, and further that we meant to have it. An old caretaker—a strange-looking old woman—showed us over it, and we found that the inside was in just as good condition as the exterior. Which was not to be wondered at, seeing that she told us it had only been unoccupied about nine months.

**"Well," he said, "it's unprofessional, I suppose, but in view of the circumstances I'll tell you."**

"'How comes it that it has remained empty all this time?' I asked her, for nine months in that locality is more than nine years elsewhere.

"She shrugged her shoulders, and looked more bovine than before. Yes—the drains were all right, and the house wasn't damp and there weren't any rats—she could assure us of that. And the house agents could give us all other particulars.

"So off we went to the house agent. The rent was eminently satisfactory, and since he seemed a very decent sort of fellow I decided to put the matter to him point-blank.

"'Look here,' I said, 'as man to man, is there a catch somewhere? I know it's your job to let the house, but this lady and I are shortly going to get married and we don't want to be let down. And from what I know of the housing problem it's a mighty strange thing that a house of that type, in this locality, should have remained empty for nearly a year.'

"He didn't answer for a bit, but just sat at his desk fingering the plans.

"'Are you a stranger to these parts?' he said at length.

"'Complete,' I answered.

"'Well,' he said, 'it's unprofessional, I suppose, but in view of the circumstances I'll tell you. Mark you, personally I think it's the most hopeless rot. It's a first-class property in first-class order; of its type and size it's out and away the best value I have on my books. But three years ago a singularly brutal murder was committed there.'

"'Three years!' I cried. 'But it's only been empty nine months!'

"'The next party that had it after the crime took place moved to a larger house,' he answered.

"'And you promise me that that is all there is against it?' I said.

"'Absolutely all,' he assured me. 'You may have any tests you like carried out.' And then he looked at my *fiancée* and rubbed his chin. 'Dash it all,' he burst out, 'I got married myself once upon a time. The real trouble is—servants. There—I've let the cat out of the bag. You know what they are: difficult at the best of times these days. But that is where the rub comes. The party I told you of certainly did move to a larger house, but I don't think they would have if they had been able to keep a servant. Silly, hysterical girls—swearing that they saw things and heard noises: you know the sort of thing.'

"We thanked him warmly for having been so frank with us, and told him we'd think it over.

"'If I can do anything for you,' were his parting words, 'let me know. I've got a few possibles on my books, though none of them compare with that one. But if you do decide to take it I would not, if I were you, get your servants locally.'

"Well, we went away, and we thought it over. It may sound perhaps a small point to some of you fellows—this servant question—but it isn't a small point to us stay-at-homes. And there was no doubt about it—the drawback was a very serious one. So serious that for a week we tried to find something else. But nothing that we saw approached the house at Sunningdale, either for comfort or convenience. And finally, to cut a long story short, we made up our minds to chance it.

"So I wrote and told the house agent of our decision, and in the stress and bustle of getting married the matter more or less passed from my mind. Furniture I had in plenty, and it was not until the house had been completely repapered and fixed-up generally that I went down again.

"I went alone, I remember, as my *fiancée* was busy that day. It was principally to get some measurements, and I took down a sandwich lunch with me. The old caretaker was there, and I thought she eyed me a bit strangely as she opened the door, though she said nothing. In fact, I don't think I saw her again until just before I was going, when she came into the hall and stood looking at me

"'What is it, Mrs. Gulliver?' I said. 'Do you want to ask me anything?'

"'So you've taken the house,' she remarked, quietly.

"'I certainly have,' I answered. 'And a very charming little house it is.'

"She nodded her head once or twice and her eyes never left my face.

"'What's the matter?' I cried, irritably. 'Have you got something at the back of your mind about it? If so, please tell me.'

"'I've nothing at the back of my mind that you would be paying attention to,' she said. 'But that's not saying that I haven't got something there.'

"'Well, what is it?' I said. 'I shall certainly pay attention to it if it's anything serious.'

"'There's death in this house, Mr. Morgan,' she answered gravely. 'It's hanging over us: I can feel it.'

"Well, gentlemen, I can tell you I was furious. Just the sort of damned silly fatuous remark which would scare the average servant stiff and send her flying from the house. At least, that's how it struck me at the time. Now—well, now I'm not so certain.

LOOKING back on the little interview I favoured Mrs. Gulliver with in that sunny, fresh-painted hall, there is one thing that stands out very clearly in my mind. And that was her impassive demeanour. She never raised her voice, even when I became thoroughly annoyed. She just stood there listening to what I had to say, and her quiet, steady eyes never wavered.

"'It's ridiculous,' I cried. 'Perfectly ridiculous. It's remarks like that which make it impossible to keep servants.'

"'Better that,' she said, 'than the other. For it will be a terrible death.'

"'But what earthly reason have you for making such a statement?' I fumed.

"'Maybe it's not earthly,' she answered.

"'Just because a murder was committed here,' I grunted. And then her last remark struck me. 'What do you mean—not earthly?'

"'There are things, Mr. Morgan, beyond our ken,' she said, gravely. 'It was my mother's gift, and my grandmother's before her, and in turn it has come to me. Second sight, I believe they call it. But sometimes we know what is going to happen. And we are never wrong.'

"'And who, might I ask, is going to die?' I said, facetiously.

"'Don't mock me, sir,' she said. 'No good ever came of that. I cannot tell you who is going to be killed, or when it is going to happen. But it is written.'

"'Be killed?' I repeated. 'Do you mean another murder?'

"'Aye,' she said, gravely. 'Another murder. The thoughts come thronging into my mind sometimes, till I have to get up from my chair and go out of doors. Then they leave me. But I tell you there is evil threatening this house and they who live in it. Where it comes from I know not; but always it is the same thing—death. Death by violence.'

"There was no good saying anything or trying to argue about it. The woman was firmly convinced that what she said was right, and I had to leave it at that. The only thing I did do was to extract a promise from her that she would not mention the matter to the servants when they came.

"'I'll not mention it,' she said, quietly, 'but for all that you won't keep them.'

"'And why not?' I snapped.

"'The tradesmen,' she answered. 'When they call of a morning—they'll talk. They'll tell the cook what happened here three years ago. They'll tell her that you may hear strange sounds and see strange things in this house, and she will believe them.'

"'Exactly,' I said, bitterly. 'And then they promptly will begin to hear strange sounds. Whereas if nothing was said to them they wouldn't.'

"'Maybe,' she answered. 'Maybe not.'

"She took a step towards me, almost her first movement since the interview had started.

"'There's something, Mr. Morgan, that threatens this house. Don't ask me what it is, for that I can't tell you. I don't know myself. But it's there—it's always there. That I do know.'

"And the next instant she was gone, and I was alone in the cheerful sunlight. Now, what would any of you have done in my place? Probably just what I did—cursed furiously. While she had been with me her strange personality had impressed me in spite of myself; now that she had gone I merely remembered the stupid vapourings of a silly woman. And a servantless future. She wouldn't be able to hold her tongue, for all her promise to the contrary, when she met the servants. Not she; she wasn't the type. And there and then I determined that whatever else happened there should be no overlap. Mrs. Gulliver should be out of

the house before the servants came in, even if it did mean some inconvenience to us. In ordinary circumstances, of course, we should have had the house open, with the servants installed, all ready for us on our return from our honeymoon. Now I decided that we would keep on Mrs. Gulliver until we came back, and then get rid of her one morning and bring the servants in in the afternoon. I felt that tradesmen's boys were, at any rate, less likely to unsettle the staff than that sombre-eyed woman."

THE fair-haired man took a sip of his drink and knocked out his pipe.

"Well," he continued, "we returned. Two months ago, almost to a day, we returned. Mrs. Gulliver was at the door to meet us and we spent the afternoon in exploring the house. Everything was perfectly charming, and my wife was delighted. In fact, the only fly in the ointment was Mrs. Gulliver's cooking. I hadn't told my wife of the conversation I had had with the woman, and I had taken the first opportunity—when I saw Mrs. Gulliver alone—of telling her that if she said one word to my wife of what she had said to me a death by violence would occur in the house and her prophecy would be fulfilled. Because my wife thought that my idea of not having any overlap was merely due to my wish to prevent Mrs. Gulliver giving gruesome details of the murder to the servants, which might unsettle them.

"That, then, was the position when we arrived back at the house. The servants were due in in three days, and until then we should have to put up with the cooking.

"Well, as I've said before, it was a charming little place. I spent the next day pottering around with my wife, planning out improvements in the garden, and the more I saw of it the less I thought of Mrs. Gulliver's strange words to me a few weeks previously. She had said nothing more, but then, save for one brief interview when I had sworn her to silence, I had not seen her alone. Her face was expressionless, and she performed her work—save the cooking—quietly and efficiently.

"The following day I had to go up to London. There were a lot of arrears of work waiting for me in the office, and I only just got back in time for dinner. And the first thing I noticed was that my wife seemed a little thoughtful and preoccupied.

"'Marjorie Thurston came to see me this afternoon,' she said, as we sat down.

"Mrs. Thurston was a pal of hers who lived at Ascot.

"'And what had she got to say for herself?' I asked.

"'Jack,' she said, 'I rather wish we hadn't taken this house.'

"I swore under my breath, and consigned Mrs. Thurston elsewhere. I could guess what she had been saying.

"'She gave me the details of the murder,' went on my wife. 'Perfectly horrible. A brute of a man who lived here and killed his wife. He——' and I could see that she was looking a bit white—'he cut off her head.'

"'Well, my dear,' I said, prosaically, 'it seems to me that if you're going to murder someone it doesn't much matter how you do it. The result is much the same.'

"'Oh, I know that,' she cried. 'But it all seems so horrible. And they say that he haunts the place.'

"'Confound Marjorie Thurston,' I said, angrily. 'She'd got no right to fill you up with a cock-and-bull story of that sort. You don't believe it, of course?'

"'No, of course not,' she answered, but it wasn't a very convincing 'no.' 'It's the servants I'm thinking of. They're bound to hear of it.'

"'Let's leave that trouble till it comes,' I said.

"And on the surface, at any rate, we did leave it. We discussed the moving of furniture to different places, and what particular car we were going to buy, and a hundred and one other things, till it was time to go to bed. In fact, I thought she had forgotten about it, until I noticed her glance over her shoulder suddenly as we went upstairs. The hall was in darkness, and she clutched my arm.

"'Jack,' she whispered, 'Jack—don't you feel it?'

"'Feel what?' I said, impressed in spite of myself.

"'Something evil,' she said, and her voice was shaking. 'Horrible and black. It's gone now, but——'

"With a little shiver she went on up the stairs, and I followed her. And you can take it from me that for the first time in my life I was annoyed with her. I had felt absolutely nothing, and I put it down to imagination. I didn't say anything. I didn't see that there was any good to be gained by doing so. But the thing annoyed me. If she was going to give way to these hysterical fears, there certainly would be no chance of keeping any servants.

"However, she said nothing more, and when the next morning dawned bright and sunny she seemed to be her normal self again. Which was a relief, seeing that I had to go up to London again.

"But before I went I asked Mrs. Gulliver if she had said anything to my wife. She absolutely denied it, and denied it so quietly

and convincingly that I believed her. And in view of what happened, gentlemen, that fact is an interesting one. Mark you, I advance no explanation, and yet it seems clear to me that two people—my wife and Mrs. Gulliver—both experienced the same sensation in that house. I have since asked my wife if she thought she saw or heard anything in the hall, and her answer is that she did not. In fact, the nearest that I can get to her sensation is that she suddenly felt herself opposed by a dreadful malign influence—one that wished her harm. She is positive that it was not imagination: she says that the sudden sensation was so marked as to be almost physical. Now, if her experience on the stairs had been due to what Mrs. Thurston had told her that afternoon, my contention is that she would have been affected differently. If it indeed had been imagination, as I thought at the time, it would have taken a more material form. In fact, I believe that Mrs. Thurston represented—if I may put it that way—the errand-boy school of thought, which grew out of idle tittle-tattle. And I believe that my wife's experience that night was a manifestation of what Mrs. Gulliver had told me. In short, that the house was, in the accepted sense of the word, not haunted, but that there was a sinister influence present—which, if we knew more of the things that lie on the border line, should have warned us of the terrible danger we were in."

The sweat was gleaming in beads on the fair-haired man's forehead, and his neglected pipe lay beside him on the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I still find it difficult to talk calmly of that next night. I was unavoidably detained in London till the last train, and what happened has been told me disjointedly by that poor child. God! when I think of it, it almost drives me mad!

"I'd telephoned through to her to say that I couldn't get down till late. I asked her how she was, and she assured me she was quite all right. She was going to bed early, and she was going to have a fire lit in her bedroom to make it more cosy. Sandwiches and whisky would be left for me in the dining-room. Mrs. Gulliver was there, and she didn't feel in the least uneasy. It must have been just imagination the night before, and anyway I wasn't to dream of coming down early. And with that I left it, and went back to a business dinner with a quiet mind.

"I'VE got the rest of it out of her a bit here and a bit there, and I'll piece it together for you in the telling. She had her dinner at eight o'clock, and at ten o'clock she went to bed. I had a latchkey, of course, so she locked the front door, but left the light on in the hall. Then she went upstairs, and of one thing she is very positive: there was no repetition of the strange feeling she had experienced the night before.

"The fire was burning brightly in her bedroom, and after she had read for a bit she began to feel sleepy. So she switched off the light, having first glanced at the time to see how much longer I should be. It was eleven o'clock, and twelve-fifteen was the earliest at which I could be back. Then she dozed off.

"She seemed, she told me, hardly to have been asleep at all when she found herself wide awake again. Something had disturbed her, but she doesn't know what. And the time was a quarter to twelve. The fire had died down a bit and was throwing that flickering jumping light about the room which makes it difficult to see clearly.

"She lay there in bed motionless and rigid, conscious only of one thing—that something was going to happen. And then she heard an unmistakable creak on the stairs, followed by a strange muttering noise. Again the stairs creaked and yet again, and she realized that someone was coming up.

"She knew it couldn't be me: she knew Mrs. Gulliver had gone to bed hours ago. Who was it—what was it—that was coming up the stairs? Well, it's easy to sit here in a well-lit smoking-room and ask why she didn't get out and lock the door. I asked her the same thing myself. The kid was just too pulverized with terror to move, gentlemen: she lay there in bed listening to those footsteps coming closer and her legs simply refused to act.

"And at last the footsteps ceased outside her door. Clear as anything she could hear the thing—whatever it was—muttering and chuckling to itself, and she just lay there rigid and sick with fear, staring at the door—waiting. After a moment or two the handle was cautiously turned, and the door commenced to open. Inch by inch it was pushed back, but since it didn't open on to the bed she couldn't see who was on the other side. And then quite suddenly there came a hoarse chuckle.

"She almost screamed; may Heaven be praised that it was only almost! For the next instant a man came into the room carrying a bundle in his hands. He walked slowly past the bed and sat down in a chair by the fire with his back to my wife. And she realized he hadn't seen her. He was muttering to himself and laughing, and after a while he deposited the bundle on the hearth-rug at his feet. It was about the size of a football, and it was wrapped up in what looked like a towel. And there he

"Jack," she whispered, "Jack—don't you feel it?"
"Feel what?" I said, impressed in spite of myself.

remained for three or four minutes whilst my wife, not daring to move, watched him from the bed. She tried to make out what he was saying to himself, but the few words she caught were just meaningless gibberish.

**With infinite care she stretched out her arm and rang the bell. She must have made some sound, for the man swung round suddenly and stared at her.**

"At last a thought struck her. By the side of the bed was a push which rang a bell just outside Mrs. Gulliver's room. She glanced at the clock; it was still twenty minutes before I could hope to be back. And she felt that she would go mad if she had to endure this any longer. So with infinite care she stretched out her arm and rang the bell. She knew she couldn't hear it—it was too far away; but she also knew that it had been working that evening. So she waited—but nothing happened. She rang again and again—still nothing. And all the time the man sat there muttering and chuckling away to himself, whilst every now and then he lifted the bundle in his hands and held it in front of him.

"Another five minutes passed, and then the strain became too great. She must have given a little cry or made some sound, for the man swung round suddenly and stared at her. He stared at her in absolute silence; then he placed his bundle carefully on the floor and stood up. And I suppose utter despair and terror gave her the strength to move. For even as the man took a step towards her she flung the bed-clothes off and darted through the door, banging it behind her. Then she fled downstairs and into the drawing-room. Behind her pounded the man, and by a second only did she get the door locked. There were French windows leading into the garden, and anything—anything to escape from the house."

The fair-haired man mopped his forehead, and his hand was shaking uncontrollably.

"You've seen the fantastic shadows cast by moonlight, haven't you? Well, there was a moon that night, shining fitfully through the clouds—and on the windows through which she meant to escape two great shadows were dancing. There were men there—more men, and, clear above the mad pounding on the door behind her, she could hear them trying to force the window. And at that moment she gave up hope. The door was creaking on its hinges; she could hear the man on the other side hurling himself against it. And the

crash of broken glass and the splintering of the door came simultaneously. She had a fleeting vision of the man who had been in her bedroom rushing in with something in his hand that gleamed, just as the other two men dashed aside the curtains and sprang into the room also. And the two of them hurled themselves at him savagely. One took him round the legs and brought him crashing to the floor; the other hit him a fearful blow behind the head with a loaded stick. And the man who had been upstairs lay still.

"'Good God, man!' said one of the new-comers, 'that was touch and go.'

"'Who is he?' said my wife, faintly. 'He's been in my bedroom for twenty minutes.'

"The two men looked at one another significantly.

"'Are you all alone in the house, mum?' said the other.

"'My husband ought to be back at any moment,' she answered.

"'Well, I guess we'll stop with you anyway till he comes. Because we'll have to get a conveyance of some sort to take this bloke away in.'

"And it was just about then that I walked in.

"'A marvellous escape, sir,' said one of them to me when I'd heard briefly what had happened. 'He's a homicidal maniac, and he gave us the slip this evening.'

"'You followed him here, I suppose?'

"'Not exactly, sir. We guessed he'd come here. You see, he's the man that did the murder in this house three years ago. And if we hadn't come in time there would have been another done to-night.'"

The fair-haired man paused, and for a while no one spoke.

"What a ghastly experience!" said Sturgis. "I don't wonder your wife's hair turned white."

The other smiled grimly.

"It wasn't that that did it. I was talking to the two warders below, when I heard scream after scream from my wife's bedroom. You see, the warders hadn't come in time to prevent a murder. For when I got to her, I found her staring at something that lay on the hearth-rug—something from which the coverings had slipped—something about the size of a football. Mrs. Thurston had been right as to how the original murder had been committed. He'd cut off his victim's head. And the only thing that had saved my wife was that the maniac had been to Mrs. Gulliver's room first. That was why the bell had not been answered."

"Great Scott!" muttered Cartwright. "Great Scott!"

"The psychology of the thing, gentlemen, is beyond me. The foolish talk about the house being haunted in the accepted sense of the word may be dismissed. But I do believe firmly that in some way or other beyond our ken the poor demented mind of that madman was able to project itself through space and make itself felt by certain personalities at its destination. How else can you account for the unfortunate housekeeper's feeling of impending evil—for my wife's sudden vivid impression as she went up the stairs? They told me that sometimes he used to lie in a sort of coma for hours at a time. Was it then that his tortured spirit fled from his body, going always to the spot which drew it like a magnet? I know not. But there's one thing I do know. If any of you gentlemen require a nice unfurnished house in the Sunningdale district——"

"Holy smoke!" said Sturgis. "I'd sooner have my monastery in Tibet."

# "ZEEBRUGGE"

## THE FULL STORY OF A WONDER-FILM TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

By FENN SHERIE

IT is obvious to all who have seen that stirring film, "Zeebrugge," that many of the vivid war scenes must have been produced artificially. Putting all other considerations aside, the present state of British film finance does not warrant expenditure on the sinking of battleships and the blowing up of harbours for the sake of realism.

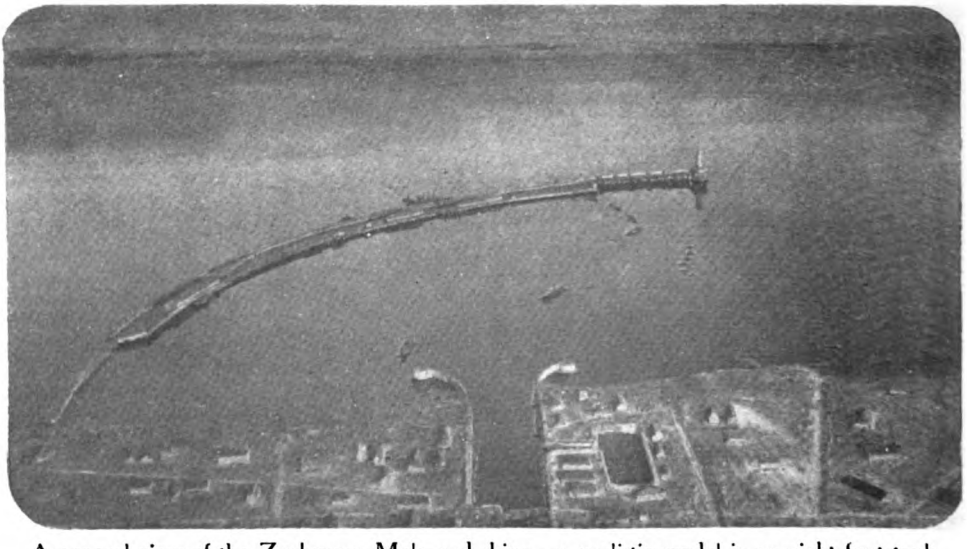
The methods by which such effects were faked have hitherto been a closely-guarded secret. The producers have naturally been anxious not to mar the dignity of their masterpieces by destroying the illusions which they have so carefully created.

Upon a recent visit to the studios of British Instructional Films, Ltd., however, I elicited a number of interesting facts, and, like an inquisitive child breaking open a beautiful toy to find out how it worked, I gradually discovered how the "Zeebrugge" film was made.

The scenic artist at work on the "aerial view" of the Mole.

I was disillusioned, but not disappointed. It was revealed to me that some of the most thrilling effects were produced by apparatus which, though brilliantly ingenious, was also astonishingly crude. Nevertheless, as I found when I re-viewed the film at the conclusion of my visit, the impressiveness of this epic of heroism was in no way destroyed by what I had seen.

Therefore, in view of the fact that this film has now been shown in almost



A general view of the Zeebrugge Mole and ships—a realistic model in an eight-foot tank.

every cinema in the country, the inquisitive child has obtained permission to show the inside of the beautiful toy which he has opened so that others may be able to share his natural delight in watching the wheels go round.

Perhaps the most astonishing revelation with regard to the "Zeebrugge" film is the fact that the greater part of it was produced by a staff of four men in a small wooden Army hut at Boreham Wood.

The Mole and the surrounding country, the land batteries, and the vessels which took part in the raid were, in many cases, realistic scale models; and the scene of the action was a lead-lined tank, eight feet square and six inches deep, fitted with elaborate under-surface mechanism which was concealed from the eye of the camera by staining the water red.

Firing one of the miniature shore batteries —an experiment in the Company's laboratory. (Inset) How the "battery," consisting of small explosive charges, was concealed in the landscape.

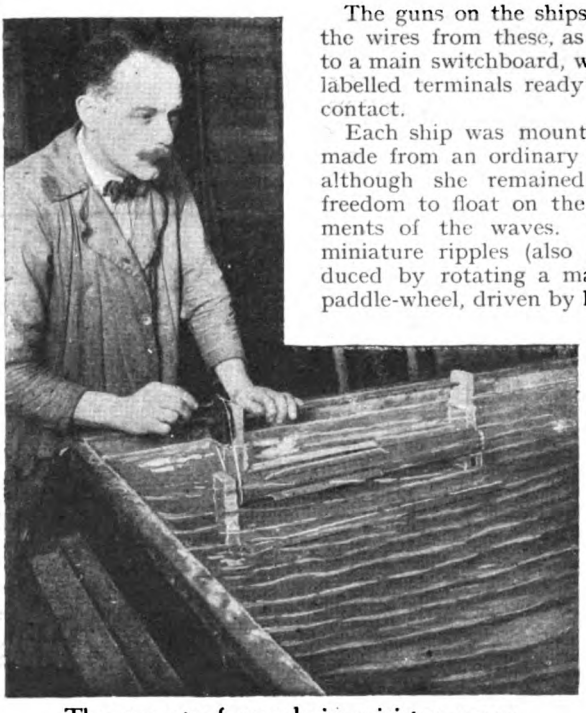
This apparatus, which, as many of the accompanying photographs reveal, was as primitive in construction as it was effective in application, was the joint product of several brains—for the work was in no way departmentalized—and entailed many weeks of research and experiment before the filming was commenced.

Let us take some of the episodes in the raid in the order in which they occurred and see how the effects were produced.

The first view of the Mole shown in the film is apparently taken from the air, showing the German submarines putting out to sea. This was made from a wooden model about four feet square, the submarines being miniatures smaller than a man's little finger, drawn by invisible threads. No water was used in these scenes.

The scenes showing the submarines at sea, sinking British merchantmen, were, as announced in the sub-titles, actual war films captured from the Germans whilst on their way to America for propaganda purposes. The views of the *Vindictive* and other vessels preparing for action, as well as some of those showing the men in training, were also taken from official records. The vivid pictures of the vessels in action, however, were nearly all staged in the tank with model ships which averaged about a foot in length.

The seashore was made of "ply and plaster," and the shore batteries which opened fire upon the Mole with such violence were composed of a number of diminutive fireworks, containing varying charges and detonators, according to whether they represented light or heavy guns. The exact formula to produce just the requisite amount of smoke in proportion to their size was only found after many experiments and photographic tests. Several charges were laid together in bundles, each charge being separately wired so that a series of shots could be fired from what was apparently one gun. These, when placed into position, were covered with plastic material and "camouflaged" by the scenic artist to blend with the surrounding landscape.



The apparatus for producing miniature waves.

The guns on the ships were charged in a like manner, and the wires from these, as well as from the land batteries, ran to a main switchboard, where they were carefully attached to labelled terminals ready for firing by means of an electrical contact.

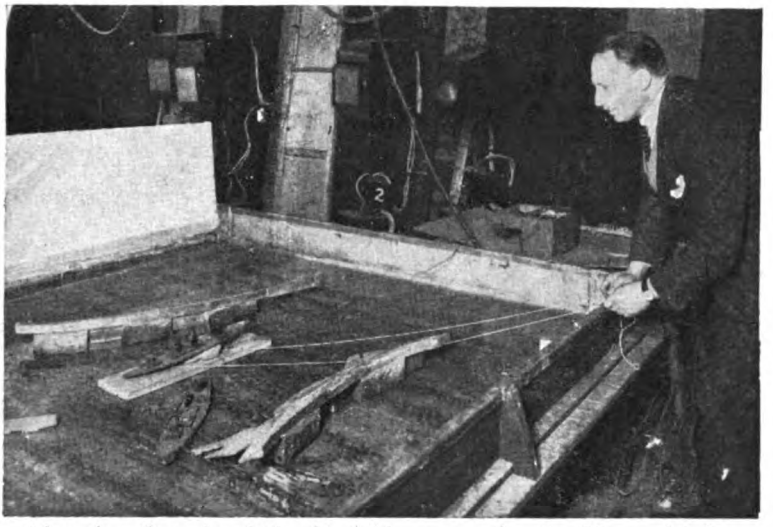
Each ship was mounted on a wheeled carriage—generally made from an ordinary roller skate—in such a manner that, although she remained under control, she had sufficient freedom to float on the surface and respond to the movements of the waves. The "waves," by the way, were miniature ripples (also carefully worked out to scale) produced by rotating a machine something like an elongated paddle-wheel, driven by hand or by electricity as desired.

Running from beneath each vessel, in addition to the contact wires already mentioned, was a length of rubber tubing and a strong thread. The tubing was connected with an apparatus containing artificial smoke—a mixture of hydrochloric acid and ammonia—which could be controlled according to the requirements of the picture. The thread was used to draw the vessel along, and, since experiments had revealed that pulling by hand produced an uneven movement, the drawing power was provided by an old clockwork gramophone motor.

The course of each vessel was controlled by metal rails against

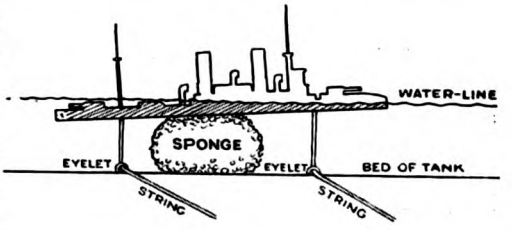
Part of the model with the water drained away, showing a blockship being towed into position by a gramophone motor. Explosions and gun-fire were controlled from the switchboard in the centre, while smoke was supplied from the container on the right.

which the wheels of the carriage ran. In the preceding photograph, which was taken after the water had been drained from the tank, all this under-surface mechanism is simplified for the sake of clarity, but it will be readily understood that when several vessels appeared in the same scene the maze of rails, wires, pipes, and threads was very complicated.



**How the effect of a sinking blockship was produced. The model ship was pulled downwards by strings attached beneath the hull, the movement being retarded by the resistance of a sponge. (See diagram below.)**

The making of a realistic smoke screen on such a small scale was another extremely delicate matter, as may be imagined from the fact that the slightest disturbance of the air in the studio—such as might be caused by a person moving from one point to another—was sufficient to disperse the smoke or cause it to drift in the wrong direction. On one occasion this occurred when the filming of an important episode was nearly complete, with the result that a "re-take" was found to be necessary. Five days' delay was incurred whilst the charges and the wires were relaid.



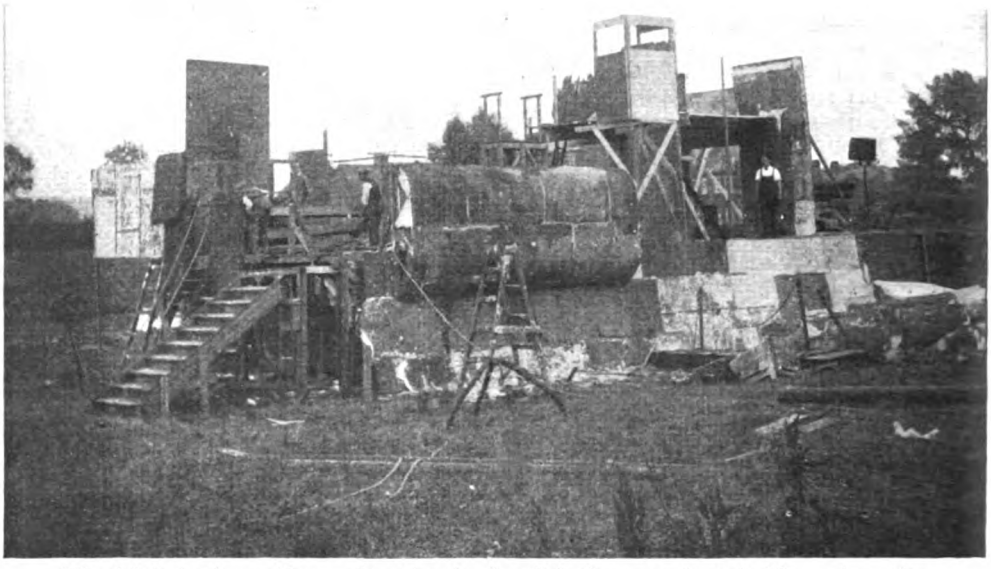

It is difficult to realize, when watching the results upon the screen, that some of the episodes which occupy only a few seconds of the presentation represent the labours of several weeks, and that the scenes which were staged in this tank occupied over six months in the filming.

The sinking of the blockships was reproduced in this manner. Each model vessel, mounted on wheels, was first towed into position by means of the apparatus described. As soon as she reached the desired spot the camera shutter was closed and a duplicate model was substituted. It had been discovered by experiment that any attempt to make the vessel sink by her own weight would produce an unnaturally jerky effect on so small a model, and it was therefore found necessary to draw the vessel down slowly. The duplicate model, therefore, was fitted fore and aft with cords which, passing through eyelet holes on a mounting board and thence beneath the surface to the edge of the tank, made it possible to pull her down slowly—the necessary resistance being provided by mounting her on an ordinary sponge! In subsequent views a third model, representing the sunken wreckage, was substituted.

For closer views of some of the vessels even larger models were made, some of them half as long as the tank itself. Here, again, great care had to be taken to produce a proportionate increase in the size of the waves and the amount of smoke.

The scenes which included human figures were, of course, even more elaborate. Thereby hangs a tale.

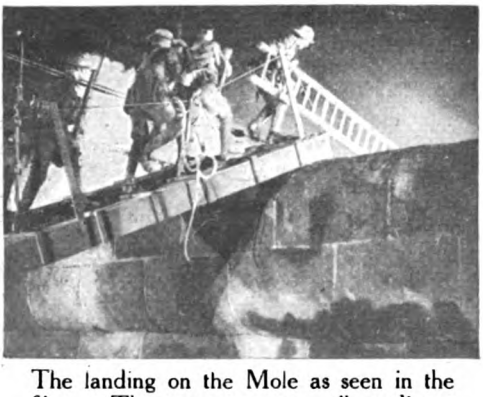
It was naturally decided that the ideal setting for most of the human episodes would be the actual Mole at Zeebrugge. Application was made to the Belgian authorities, who not only granted permission for the taking of the pictures, but agreed to provide ships, searchlights, and troops to assist in the production. When the producers arrived at Zeebrugge, with a small company of actors and a large assortment of costumes and "props," people flocked from all parts of the country to watch them at work, and stayed there



The Mole in the making. Erecting the "set" in the grounds at Surbiton where the accompanying scenes from the film were made.

several days whilst the filming was in progress. How the news of their intention had been circulated, nobody appeared to know—although it is probable that the hotel proprietors were not altogether innocent!

The filming of the scenes upon the Mole, in which both the British and the Germans were represented by Belgian troops dressed



The landing on the Mole as seen in the film. The actors were all ordinary "Tommies," and the Mole was as shown above.

for the occasion, was not without incident. There was one scene, for example, in which it was required to depict a German machine gunner firing out to sea. Since the gun used for this scene would not operate

The bridge of the *Royal Iris* being blown away. This scene was staged upon the right-hand portion of the "set" shown above.

with blank cartridges, dummy wooden bullets were used and the gunner was instructed to fire well into the air, the camera being situated on the sands just below him. As soon as the producer gave the order the lights were turned on and the gunner opened fire. Unfortunately, in his excitement he forgot to raise his sights, with the result that the camera man found himself under a heavy fire of wooden bullets. Owing to the dazzling effect of the searchlights he was quite invisible, either to the gunner or the producer, and all he could do was to take as much cover as possible behind his

camera and hope for the best. Fortunately, he was not hit, although he declares that it was one of the most uncomfortable moments in his life.

In another scene representing the fight on the Mole one of the Belgian soldiers was detailed to act the part of a dead German. The episode had to be re-taken four or five times before the producer was satisfied,

but this man, with admirable fortitude, lay perfectly still all the while. Eventually, when the filming was finished, the producer decided to rally the troops and compliment this man upon the patient manner in which he had carried out a somewhat unpleasant task—for it was a cold night and rain was falling incessantly. When the signal was given, however, the man failed to rise, and, fearing that he might have been accidentally kicked or stunned during the *mêlée*, the producer ran to pick him up. He was fast asleep!

After a fortnight's work under somewhat difficult conditions the scenes on the Mole were completed and the company returned to England.

Then came a tremendous disappointment. Upon developing the film it was discovered that the light from the Belgian searchlights, although apparently as bright as that from British searchlights, with which the cinematographers were already familiar, was not of the same actinic quality, and nearly all the film that had been exposed was absolutely blank!

The producers, however, were undaunted. The company had just moved to a new studio at Surbiton, and in the grounds there they set to work to erect a full-sized replica of part of the Mole, as well as elaborate "sets" representing the decks of the *Vindictive*, the *Iris*, and other vessels.

Soldiers from Kingston Barracks were placed at the producer's disposal and nearly all the big scenes were re-enacted in the somewhat incongruous surroundings of the Surrey countryside. As all who have seen the film will agree, the realism of the landing on the Mole was in no way impaired by the fact that it was taken on *terra firma*. Indeed, even to one who knows the secret, the episodes which were staged against these artificial backgrounds are far more convincing than the few successful portions of film taken on the spot.

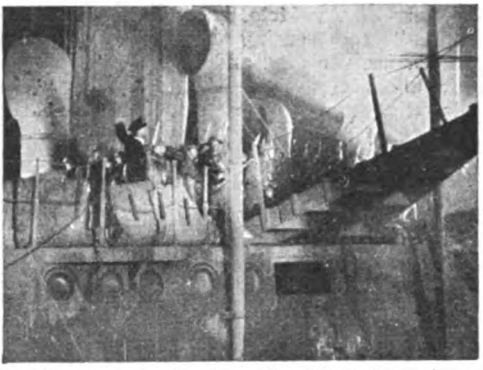
In one respect, however, the task of the producer was a little more difficult. Whereas the Belgian troops, by reason of their temperament and their past experience, enacted the war scenes with the utmost seriousness, the British Tommies, being mostly young recruits, were inclined at first to treat the whole affair as a glorious joke.

When Mr. A. V. Bramble, the producer, remonstrated with the sergeant in charge he promptly took the matter in hand in a typically military manner.

Falling the men in, he addressed them as follows:—

"Now look 'ere, my lads," he said. "This ain't a blinkin' Charlie Chaplin film, and you can take it

**The heroic deed of a gallant officer, who climbed a ladder from the *Vindictive* and endeavoured to fix a grappling anchor to the parapet of the Mole, but was shot in the attempt. Few who saw this inspiring episode on the screen would imagine that it was filmed in a suburban garden.**



Preparing to land on the Mole from the deck of the *Vindictive*. This realistic scene was also staged on dry land.

from me that when we does the next scene the first —— idiot what looks at the camera or laughs is ' for it.'"

Those few words, supported by a brief address from the producer explaining the purpose of the film, had an instantaneous effect, and thenceforward every man played his part with the utmost sincerity.

How well they responded to the appeal is evidenced by the fact that, in the scenes depicting the landing on the Mole and the return to the *Vindictive* after the raid, not one professional actor took part.

Even the impressive episode in which a sergeant turned back to fetch a wounded comrade, and laid him tenderly upon the deck with the words "I wasn't going to leave you, old pal," was acted with wonderful sincerity by a non-commissioned officer who had never seen a film camera before.

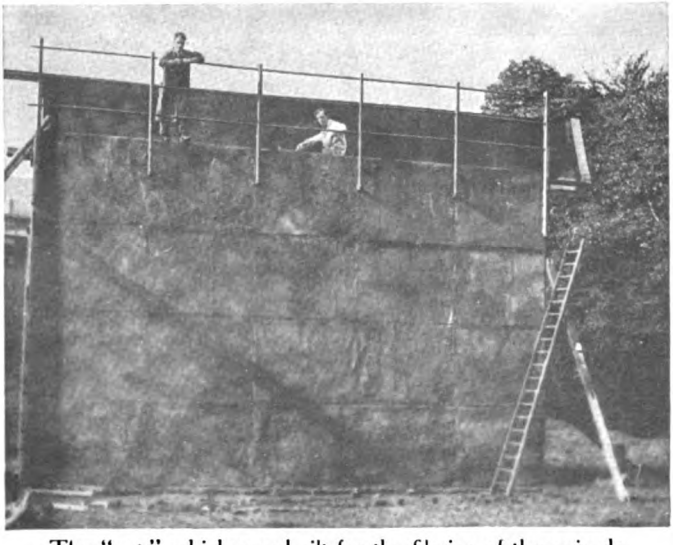
It must not be imagined from the foregoing disclosures that all the effects in "Zeebrugge" were faked. In addition to the introduction of actual war-films there are many portions in which the real and the artificial were skilfully blended.

For example, there is a scene showing the German cyclists riding up the Mole and falling into the sea when they reach the gap made by the explosion of the submarine C3. The first view of the cyclists was actually taken on the Mole, being one of the few successful portions filmed in the rays of the Belgian searchlights. The "close-up" of the cyclist falling into the gap was taken in the studio (the actor who took part falling, with his bicycle, into a net outside the range of the camera), whilst the general view of the cyclists actually plunging from

The landing party climbing down from the parapet to the Mole itself—another scene from the film.

the Mole into the water was staged on the ingenious working model in the tank.

Incidentally, as an example of the versatility of the studio staff and their readiness to meet any emergency, it may be mentioned that the cyclist who was engaged for this part was unable to turn up when required, and that his place was taken by the scenic artist. A similar emergency arose in the filming of the scene depicting the Mole commandant in his office receiving the news that the British were attempting to land, for in the absence of the actor this part was taken

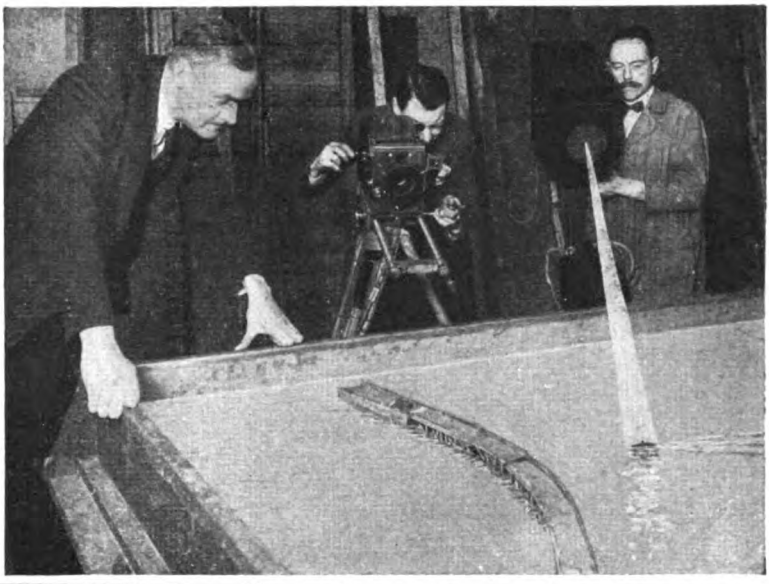


The "set" which was built for the filming of the episode shown above.

by the producer himself.

Of course, as is evident to all who have seen the film, some of the scenes were taken on an actual battleship at sea. The episode in which the "surplus crews" hide themselves on board the *Vindictive* so that they shall not be left out of the raid, for example, was enacted by sailors on board H.M.S. *Curaçoa*.

The part of the officer in this scene, however, was played by a professional actor, who caused considerable amusement amongst the ship's company (who had assembled *en masse* to watch the operations and offer unwanted criticism and advice) by dusting his face with yellow powder—a necessary feature of cinema make-up—before the filming commenced.



Photographing one of the scenes in the model tank. Submarine C3 approaching the Mole.

The gap in the Mole after the explosion of submarine C3. This vivid picture was taken from the model shown in the above photograph.

Consequently, when the next scene was taken, depicting the bos'n blowing his pipe and giving orders, and a real petty officer volunteered his services, he had to play his part under a ceaseless hail of good-natured chaff.

"What price Duggie Fairbanks?" shouted one.

"Don't forget to powder your nose," yelled another.

"What are they paying you, matey—ten thousand a week?" called a third.

As a matter of fact all the men who took part in the film were paid for their services, sometimes individually and sometimes through regimental or other funds, and remuneration varied according to the amount of time and trouble expended. For falling into the sea a sailor usually received ten shillings—and five shillings for each subsequent immersion.

The filming of episodes of this description was no easy matter, for the camera man often had to be lashed to the side or the stern of a vessel with a very heavy sea running. Fortunately he was of sound constitution and felt no ill effects, but it is worthy of mention if only to emphasize the fact that the story of the making of "Zeebrugge" is one long record of patience, ingenuity, and resourcefulness.

*Photographs by courtesy of the New Era Films, Ltd.*

MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS, AND MADELON.—No. 10.

# Christian

"Look carefully," he directed, "exactly where I am pointing, and tell me whether you see anything."

MONTE CARLO on a moonless night late in May is not without its sombre effects. Mr. Billingham, loitering on that extension of the Terrace promenade which passes the Post Office and reaches to the bottom of the hill, took note of the changed aspects of the place during the last six weeks. The Sporting Club, once gaily illuminated, with blue-liveried servants waiting at the top of the steps to welcome visitors, and rows of cars drawn up against the pavement, was closed and dark. The great hotels which lined the hills no longer presented a semicircle of glittering lights. Here and there a few lights twinkled out from the different villas, but, for the greater part, the hillside had become a chaos of unilluminated blackness.

Mr. Billingham, standing with his back to the stone balustrade, smoking thoughtfully and looking landwards, was suddenly aware of a touch upon his arm. He turned abruptly to find Madelon by his side, a black silk cloak thrown over her evening gown. Her approach had been, perhaps purposely, noiseless. She seemed to have crept out of the void.

"Useless!" she laughed. "I came to make discoveries, and behold I find you alone and apparently star-gazing!"

"Not star-gazing," Mr. Billingham murmured.

"Seriously, I am disappointed," she went on. "I thought there must have

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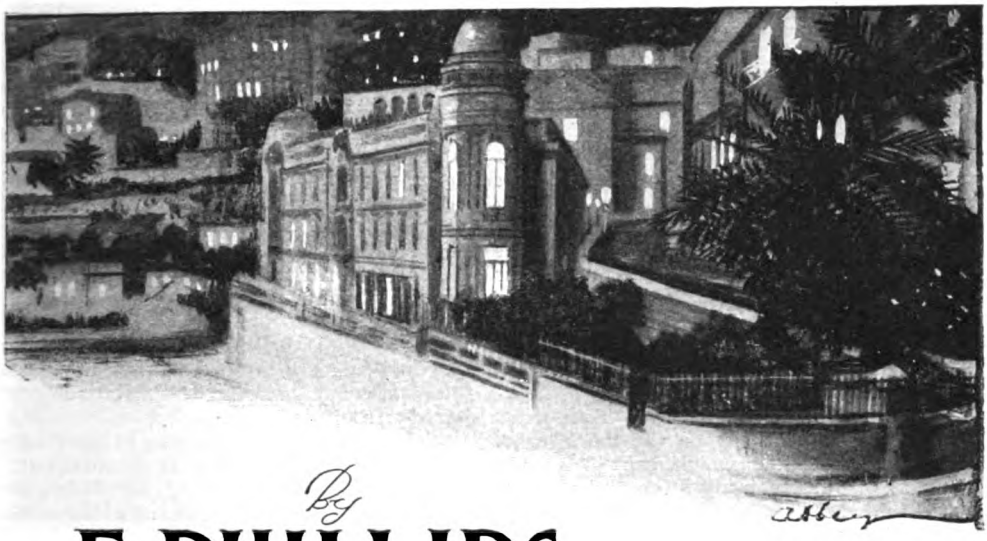
# the Concierge



By

## E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

*Illustrated by S. ABBEY*

been some reason for these mysterious nocturnal strolls of yours."

"There is a reason," Mr. Billingham confided.

"An assignation ? "

He shook his head.

"Look carefully," he directed, "exactly where I am pointing, and tell me whether you see anything."

She stood by his side and obeyed.

"I see something," she admitted, "which looks like a rapidly moving glow-worm, appearing and disappearing."

Mr. Billingham nodded.

"I will tell you what it is," he said. "It is someone with an electric torch moving about in a room of an hotel which is closed for the season."

"A caretaker, perhaps," she suggested.

"Perhaps," he assented. "Yet one wonders why a caretaker should be wandering about always in the same room at nighttime."

"He may be sleeping there," she observed.

"Then why not use the electric light in an ordinary way ? " Mr. Billingham rejoined. "Of course," he went on, "there may be a very simple explanation. There probably is. Yet there are other things which have made me wonder about that light."

"As, for instance ? " Madelon demanded.

"The first time I noticed it there was just a little moonlight, and I could see that the light came from the fifth window of the third storey of the Hôtel d'Angleterre. It was at that hotel, as I dare say you remember, that Seth Dickerson, the American who had been gambling so heavily, committed suicide last week."

"I remember," Madelon murmured.

"They closed the hotel because of it a few days earlier than they meant to."

"Just so," Mr. Billingham agreed. "And the hotel has remained closed ever since. There is no caretaker in it. Whoever is moving about that room with an electric torch is an intruder."

"An empty hotel!" Madelon mused. "It doesn't sound exactly like a happy hunting ground. And why that particular room? The poor fellow committed suicide because he had lost every penny he possessed at the tables."

Mr. Billingham did not reply. He was watching the faint flashing of the light. Sometimes it disappeared altogether for several minutes. At no time was it more than a glimmer.

"Nevertheless," he said at last, "whoever is moving about that room is searching for something. You see the light is turned in every direction, but never for a moment straight at the window."

"Shall we go up?" she proposed.

Mr. Billingham shook his head.

"Not to-night," he replied. "To-morrow morning I shall call upon the manager of the Royalty Hotel, which belongs to the same people. If you are interested you can come with me."

She thrust her arm through his.

"Meanwhile," she begged, "let us go to the Casino. I am rather uneasy about my uncle. He has borrowed no money for two days, and he is becoming mysterious."

THE manager of the Royalty Hotel and Mr. Billingham were from the first on the best of terms. Mr. Billingham in a very few words explained his mission.

"That poor chap Dickerson's folk have been writing to me," he said—"the fellow who committed suicide over at the Angleterre, you know."

"That affair is all finished with," the manager exclaimed, hastily. "The hotel at first paid for the funeral and all expenses, but the Société has now refunded the amount."

"That's all right," Mr. Billingham declared, good-humouredly. "Seth Dickerson's people don't want any fuss any more than you do. Theirs is just a sentimental idea. They want me to have a look at the room where he died and send them a few trifling particulars."

"Delighted to do anything we can for you, Mr. Billingham," the manager assured him cordially. "Mr. Dickerson's clothes and effects were all sent to an address in London, as I dare say you know. The loose change on his table was given to the servants. It amounted to less than their weekly tips."

"That's quite all right," Mr. Billingham repeated. "Naturally a fellow like Dickerson doesn't commit suicide while he's got anything left. How can we have a look at the room?"

"Christian, the concierge of the hotel, has the keys," the manager replied. "He is here now helping our own man. I will send for him."

He touched a bell, sent a message, and a few minutes later a tall, remarkably fine-looking man in the uniform of the hotel entered the room. He saluted Mr. Billingham, whom he knew slightly, and smiled at the young lady. To all appearance he was the absolute prototype of his class; brimful of knowledge, which he was only too anxious to impart, capable, and good-tempered.

"This gentleman," the manager explained, "has heard from the relatives of Mr. Dickerson. He wants to have a look at the room Mr. Dickerson occupied.

For a single second there was something beyond ordinary interest in the man's face. Mr. Billingham, who had been watching him closely, took note of it.

"There is nothing belonging to Mr. Dickerson left in the room, sir," he pointed out.

"Quite so. I know that," Mr. Billingham intervened. "It's just an idea his people have. Want me to tell them what sort of a place it was he ended his days in. Silly idea—but folks are silly sometimes."

"You had better take Mr. Billingham and the young lady across," the manager directed.

"Certainly, sir," the man acquiesced. "If you and the young lady will step this way, sir," he continued, turning to Mr. Billingham, "I have the keys in my pocket."

They took leave of the manager and crossed the street towards the Angleterre. The concierge opened the front door of the hotel and they passed into an atmosphere of gloom and silence. There were dust sheets over the mahogany counter and the cushions of the lounge; a faint odour of tea leaves and disinfectants everywhere.

"I shall have to trouble you to come up the stairs, sir," Christian observed. "The lift is not running."

"On which floor was Mr. Dickerson's room?" Mr. Billingham inquired.

"The third, sir," the man replied.

They mounted the stairs in silence. In the corridors the sound of their footsteps awakened faint echoes. Even the stair carpets had been taken up and stood rolled together in corners. The concierge led them unhesitatingly to the door of a room which he unlocked and threw open.

"This was Mr. Dickerson's apartment, sir," he announced. "He shot himself in the easy-chair over there."

It was a bedroom of the plainest possible description; spotlessly clean, bare now of carpet or even rugs, bedstead dismantled—an epitome of dreariness. There was a little dust on the floor and a little rim of dust which Mr. Billingham noticed as the door was opened. He looked around him in some perplexity.

"How long has this room been closed up?" he asked.

"About a fortnight, sir."

"And you are sure that this is the room Mr. Dickerson occupied?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"During that fortnight," Mr. Billingham persisted, "has anyone entered it at all?"

"Certainly not, sir," was the confident reply. "No one has entered the hotel that I know of."

The man stood, the keys in his hand, patient yet obviously anxious to bring this visitation to a close. Mr. Billingham walked to the window, opened it, and stepped out on to the balcony. He looked to the left. There were five windows to be counted. The one through which he had passed was the sixth.

"Have any of these rooms got more than one window?" he asked.

"The next-door one has, I believe, sir," the man answered, looking a little puzzled. "Is there anything further I can do for you, or the young lady?" he added, after a moment's pause.

Mr. Billingham looked round once more regretfully and sorrowfully.

"Well, I guess not," he decided. "It's a poor room, this. Pretty hard up towards the end, I expect."

The concierge nodded.

"They stripped him clean, sir," he agreed. "It's a way they have down yonder."

The three descended the stairs almost in silence. Christian led them into the street, and Mr. Billingham handed him a twenty-franc note.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," the man said. "You are sure there is nothing more I can do?"

"Nothing at all, thank you," Mr. Billingham assured him. "I will just have a word with your manager."

THEY re-entered the Royalty Hotel. Mr. Billingham, with Madelon still by his side, made his way to the bureau. The manager looked up and nodded.

"Satisfied your curiosity, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Billingham glanced behind him to be sure that the door was closed.

"I guess not," he answered, gravely. "I'm afraid there's a little trouble ahead."

The manager's jaw dropped. Like all hotel proprietors, he disliked trouble of the sort indicated by his visitor.

"Why, what is wrong?" he demanded.

"In the first place," Mr. Billingham inquired, "what was the number of the room occupied by Seth Dickerson?"

"Number 167," was the prompt reply.

"Precisely. Now your concierge Christian deliberately took us to 168 and showed it to me as the room occupied by Seth Dickerson."

"I cannot imagine how he could have made such a mistake," the manager remarked, with a perplexed frown. "He knows the hotel inside out."

"Oh, he knew all right," Mr. Billingham observed, dryly. "Tell me now, have you keys to the hotel yourself, as well as the set Christian has been using?"

The manager opened his drawer.

"Certainly I have."

"And a pass-key to the rooms?"

"I have both."

"Then I want you," Mr. Billingham begged, "to send Christian out of the way for half an hour and to take us across there."

The manager glanced at the clock.

"That is easy," he said. "I will send him down to the station to meet the four-thirty. There is always the chance of a visitor or two. Excuse me!"

He spoke through a tube for a moment, then rose to his feet.

"Of course," he continued, "I have not the least idea what you are driving at, Mr. Billingham, but I am entirely at your disposal. Come along, then!"

They waited for a few minutes until the hotel bus had passed the window, then once more they crossed the road, entered the gloomy-looking building, and mounted the stairs to the third floor. This time the manager opened the door of number 167. He had no sooner done so than he himself gave vent to a little exclamation of surprise, and Mr. Billingham, following close behind, whistled softly. The room—larger than the neighbouring one, with two windows and curved balcony—was in the wildest disorder. The carpet had been rolled back and was lying in an untidy heap upon the floor. The bed-clothes had been drawn over the bottom of the bedstead, drawers stood open, an easy-chair had been overturned upon the floor and apparently the whole of its stuffing removed. The manager looked round him in blank amazement. Mr. Billingham was conscious of a feeling of intense satisfaction.

"I'm going to put you wise to something, Monsieur Lavalle," he said. "You see for yourself that someone has made a systematic search of this room. What do you think they wanted? I'll tell you. They

wanted the money Seth Dickerson won at the Casino on his last night there."

"Won?" the manager repeated, incredulously. "Why, Mr. Dickerson came home a ruined man. That's why he shot himself."

"Dickerson did nothing of the sort," was the confident reply. "That's what put me on the track of this trouble. I happened to know the croupiers at the tables where he played, and two of the *chefs*. Seth Dickerson played at four tables on the night of his death, and he brought home with him to this hotel a matter of between sixty and seventy milles. He had no more idea of committing suicide that evening than I have at the present moment."

"Then why did he?" the other demanded.

"He didn't," Mr. Billingham rejoined. "He was murdered."

Monsieur Lavalle had no words. It was Madelon who intervened.

"Murdered!" she gasped. "By whom?"

"By Christian, the concierge," Mr. Billingham pronounced.

There was a moment's breathless silence. In the midst of it Madelon raised a warning finger. From somewhere outside they seemed to hear the sound of a muffled footstep. Mr. Billingham moved to the door and looked out. There was no one in sight. He closed the door again.

"Listen," he said. "I guess this is mainly conjecture, but I have a sort of knack of putting things together, and this is how I build up this little affair. I knew Seth Dickerson. He wasn't much of a man, but he wasn't the sort to use a gun against himself, although I know he kept one handy. I saw him in the Casino the night of his supposed suicide, and he couldn't contain himself—told me he had been winning at every table. I asked the croupiers afterwards. They all said the same thing. He had been losing before, but he had been picking it up all the time that night. The long and the short of it is this. Seth Dickerson left the Casino and came back to the hotel with a packet of mille notes in his pocket and as nearly drunk as a man may be and keep on his feet."

"He hadn't forty francs when his things were gone through," the manager objected. "The Société de Bains de Mer paid for his funeral."

"Just so," Mr. Billingham agreed, "but nevertheless he brought home sixty milles with him, and unless I'm mistaken the sixty milles were at one time or another in this room. I've a friend at police headquarters here, and although not a word of the proceedings at the inquest crept into the press, I got to know all about it. When Seth Dickerson reached home that night there was only one man up in the hotel. That man was your concierge—a man with whom Dickerson was always too friendly. He invited him up to have a drink. Christian went off to get the bottle of whisky Seth ordered, and brought it up to the room. When he arrived, I'm figuring it out that Seth had hidden the sixty thousand francs, or whatever it was. He was just sober enough not to be an utter fool. They sat and drank together, those two, and Seth bragged about his winnings. When he did it I don't know, but I reckon that your man shot him when he sat in that chair drunk, went through him for the money, failed to find it, and got out scared. Or it's likely enough that Seth told him he had hidden it without telling him where. Anyway, when he shot him he expected to get hold of the sixty thousand francs right away. He couldn't find them and he had to clear out. What happened then? The room was closed for a time, until after the inquest. No searching was done because no one had any idea that there was anything to look for. Your concierge knew, though. You closed the hotel, and I don't blame you. Your man didn't want to come in during the daytime, although he had the keys, but for the last two nights he has been ransacking this room."

"How do you know that?" Monsieur Lavalle demanded.

"Because I have a fancy for moonlight strolls," Mr. Billingham explained. "The last two nights, from the promenade down below, I've seen someone hunting round here with an electric torch. It fitted in with my own ideas, so I came to you and asked to be shown this room. Just as I imagined he might, Christian took me to the next room. I could see from below that the room he was searching had two windows, because every now and then the light disappeared."

"THERE is someone outside," Madelon interrupted, suddenly.

They all listened. There was nothing to be heard. The silence of the great empty hotel seemed almost oppressive. Mr. Billingham moved softly to the door and threw it open. He stood there for a moment, listening, his right hand underneath his coat. A peculiar gloom seemed to envelop the place. There was no one in sight, however, no sound to be heard. Yet, curiously enough, Mr. Billingham had the same idea as Madelon. He felt that there was someone near. He closed the door carefully, and this time he turned the key in the lock.

"Christian killed Seth Dickerson all right," he declared, "but as yet he hasn't lifted the money."

Monsieur Lavalle took out his handkerchief and dabbed his forehead.

"I do not understand, Mr. Billingham," he said, "how you dare take all this for granted."

"Will you explain to me the lights in this room for the last three nights, then?" Mr. Billingham demanded. "Will you tell me why your concierge, when ordered to show me this room, showed me the adjoining one? Will you tell me what all this disorder means but a systematic search, and by whom? Who else has had access to the place? No, sir, Seth Dickerson never shot himself. He lost his life because he drank like a fool and hobnobbed with a ruffian. The sixty thousand francs for which he was murdered are in this room, and I'm laying odds," Mr. Billingham concluded, "that I find them within ten minutes."

"It seems to me that someone has searched the place pretty thoroughly already," Monsieur Lavalle remarked, grimly. "They have torn the stuffing out of my chairs and ruined my carpet."

"They have searched," Mr. Billingham admitted, "but they didn't know what I know. Seth Dickerson had been a sailor in his younger days and was just as handy with his needle as any woman. They didn't remember that in the lapel of Seth's coat when he was discovered there was a needle. I'm taking a chance, perhaps," Mr. Billingham added, "but here goes."

He produced a penknife from his pocket, and, moving to the bed, ripped up one of the pink damask curtains which hung from a movable brass rod at its side. He thrust his hand into the space and a beatific smile parted his lips. Suddenly Madelon pointed to the door. They followed the direction of her finger. There had been no sound, but the door handle was slowly moving. The door was pressed inwards until the lock was strained. Mr. Billingham withdrew his left hand from the interior of the doubled curtains upon the bed, whilst his right hand went to his hip pocket. He motioned Madelon over to his side, and pointed at the door.

"Open it," he whispered.

Monsieur Lavalle hesitated. The sight of Mr. Billingham's gleaming revolver, however, reassured him. He turned the key. Almost immediately the door opened. Christian, the concierge, passed across the threshold. He seemed to bring with him something of the ghostly silence of the great closed hotel. He said not a word. He looked from one to the other, and it was as though a sudden lunacy had seized him. His cheeks were chalk white; his gracious smile, his portly demeanour, his magnificent self-assurance were all gone. He was like a person stricken with mortal fear. Nevertheless he did not flinch at the sight of Mr. Billingham's revolver.

"I murdered Mr. Dickerson," he confessed. "He told me he had eighty thousand francs. He was a fool to tell me. I murdered him with his own revolver. I knew they would bring it in suicide. I have given myself away looking for the money."

"The money was here all right," Mr. Billingham observed.

Christian looked at him steadfastly, yet incuriously, looked at the notes upon the bed, looked at the ripped-up curtain.

"He put them there when I went for the whisky," he muttered, in a dazed tone. "I thought I had searched the room, too!"

Monsieur Lavalle was standing at the bottom of the bed. He seemed unable to take his eyes off his *employé's*.

"You must have been mad, Christian," he exclaimed.

"I was mad," was the dreary admission, "but eighty thousand francs seemed a great deal against the life of a man who drank, drank, drank until one could see him passing. I was mad. Now I am not!"

He spoke so coldly and so entirely without any trace of agitation that no one had any idea, until too late, of his purpose. He crossed the room and stepped out on to the balcony. They saw him silhouetted for a moment against the sky, saw his knee upon the balustrade, saw him go over—a shapeless mass, a gleam of white from his face underneath—and Madelon covered her ears with her hands. The two men stood silent. From somewhere below, in that deep gulf of blackness, came the sound, faint but unmistakable, of a dull thud. Mr. Billingham thrust his revolver back in his pocket and moved anxiously to Madelon's side. From outside they could hear the sound of shrieking voices and pattering footsteps along the gravel path.

MR. BILLINGHAM, like the vast majority of his compatriots, thoroughly enjoyed the ministrations of an efficient barber. He was just completing his second session of the day in the chair of his favourite operator—a light before-dinner shave—when he happened to glance towards the door. Mercifully his attendant had completed his offices with the razor, and Mr. Billingham's violent start and sudden leaping to his feet were not accompanied by any disastrous results. With a towel still around his neck he made for the door just in time to confront a tall, thin, very obvious fellow-countryman who was on the point of entering.

"For the love of Mike!" Mr. Billingham

exclaimed. "Eli Herd! Say, what are you doing here, anyhow?"

If Mr. Billingham's surprise at recognizing his friend had been great, Mr. Eli Herd's amazement amounted to consternation. He was a man of sallow complexion who wore gold-rimmed spectacles and might presumably have been the subject of some nervous affection. He shook hands time after time with Mr. Billingham through sheer incapacity to do anything else.

"Well, well!" he faltered at last, with belated eloquence. "Some meeting, this!"

"Nothing wrong with linoleum, I hope?" Mr. Billingham demanded anxiously.

"Booming!" was the reassuring reply.

"Then, darn it all, why don't you look glad to see an old friend?" Mr. Billingham insisted.

The new-comer made manifest efforts to regain some measure of poise.

"Say, Samuel," he begged, "take that towel away from your neck, get your hat, and come right along with me."

His friend obeyed and the two men strolled off together.

"Well, what's the good news, anyway?" Mr. Billingham inquired.

Mr. Eli Herd was afflicted with another fit of silence. He shook his head. He had apparently arrived at some mournful resolution.

"Sam," he said, "we will sit down together at one of those little tables outside the *café*. You will find—another friend—there. You shall know everything!"

"What the hell is there to know?" Mr. Billingham, who was a little irritable that evening, demanded.

"In three minutes," his companion groaned, "you will understand why my meeting you like this has been something of a shock."

IN less than three minutes Mr. Billingham understood perfectly. They crossed the Place in front of the Casino and approached the solitary figure seated underneath one of the striped umbrellas reading a newspaper. At their approach she removed the newspaper for a moment from in front of her face and promptly dropped it. If Mr. Eli Herd had been surprised to see Mr. Billingham, the lady was even more so.

"Samuel!" she cried, breathlessly.

"Harriet!" Mr. Billingham gasped.

The lady rose to her feet. She was tall, good-looking in a severe way, of Junoesque proportions. She was somewhat severely dressed in the costume of an American lady travelling round the world with a suit-case.

"Say, what are you doing here with Eli?" Mr. Billingham continued.

As usual, it was the lady who possessed the courage.

"Eli and I," she announced, "are on our honeymoon."

"My God!" Mr. Billingham exclaimed. "What about me?"

"Our divorce," the lady went on, having now fully recovered her composure, "was pronounced last month. You should have had the papers by this time. In your absence there was no defence to the charges which I was compelled to bring against you."

Mr. Billingham looked helplessly around. A waiter, full of unworthy suspicions, assisted him into a chair.

"Let me get the hang of this," he begged. "You've divorced me and married my lawyer here, Eli Herd?"

"Samuel, be calm," she enjoined.

"I'm calm enough," Mr. Billingham assured them, his voice gaining strength at every moment. "Why didn't you let me know about it all?"

"We thought it best to keep the matter to ourselves," the late Mrs. Billingham explained. "Eli said that the divorce would cost us less pronounced in your absence. Our separation, Samuel, as you know, was irretrievable and final. I make no excuses for my action. Eli has looked after my interests in your absence with care and discretion. He is in a position, fortunately, to release me from any financial obligations towards you."

"I've cleaned up a little lately in New York," Mr. Eli Herd confided, "over a million on that Ardington deal you may have read about."

Mr. Billingham looked around for a waiter. Then his face fell.

"Only one way of celebrating an occasion like this," he sighed, "and, alas, that don't go with you folk. Still as hot on prohibition as ever, Harriet?"

Mrs. Eli Herd coughed.

"To tell you the truth, Samuel," she confessed, "although my principles remain unchanged, Eli's health during the last few months——"

"The doctor has been most insistent," the latter intervened.

"At this time of the day," Mrs. Herd continued graciously, "we have slipped into the habit of taking what I believe is known as a 'champagne cocktail.'"

Mr. Billingham fanned himself with one hand and summoned a waiter with the other. His order was given in such terms that within five minutes the suggested beverage was brought. He promptly raised his glass.

"Well, here's how!" he said, a little weakly. "I mean," he went on, correcting himself, "my best wishes to you both."

"Say, I'm glad you're taking this right, Sam," his friend declared with an air of

**They saw him silhouetted for a moment against the sky, saw his knee upon the balustrade——**

relief. "It didn't seem to me you'd any kick, but still we didn't reckon upon coming upon you like this before you'd heard the news."

"It might have been more considerate to prepare me," Mr. Billingham remarked, "but we'll forget it."

"I'm sure I shall always wish you every

happiness, Samuel," the lady went on, looking thoughtfully at her empty glass. "You and I were wholly unsuited to one another. You must forgive my saying that I looked for more principle and a more serious outlook from a man to whom I gave everything. You, from your point of view, required from me greater tendencies towards frivolity than I was able to indulge in. You took no interest whatever, for instance, in my work for the Women's National Association."

"Or in your campaign for prohibition," Mr. Billingham murmured, under his breath, as he replenished the lady's glass from the bottle which the waiter, according to instructions, had brought. "My dear," he concluded, "let bygones be bygones. I bear neither of you any ill-will. To-night I am engaged, but during your stay here we must arrange a little dinner. Eli and I, too, must have a talk about business."

Temporary addresses were exchanged. Mr. Billingham bade his friends farewell and made his way over to the Hôtel de Paris, where Madelon, seated at one of the little tables upon the terrace, was awaiting his arrival. She looked at him curiously as he made his excuses, ordered the cocktails, and called for the menu.

"I will forgive you for being late," she said, "but tell me who those strange people were to whom you were talking."

Mr. Billingham sat down.

"One of them," he said, "was my wife."

"Your what?" Madelon exclaimed, with a very queer little note in her tone.

"My wife—was a month ago, I mean," Mr. Billingham explained. "She has just divorced me and married my lawyer. They are on their honeymoon."

"And you didn't know?" Madelon gasped.

"Not an idea," was the emphatic rejoinder. "We parted many years ago. We couldn't hit it off together. She is great on good works and all that sort of thing. And now——"

Mr. Billingham broke off. He was looking across the Square. In the distance he could just see Mr. Eli Herd replenishing his companion's glass from the bottle. Suddenly Mr. Billingham began to laugh. He laughed till the tears stood in his eyes. He laughed till Madelon began to laugh too, out of sheer sympathy.

"What a ridiculous story!" she exclaimed. "And a ridiculous situation!"

He wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Talk about adventures!" he murmured. "Why, where is your uncle?"

Madelon shook her head a little sadly.

"He is behaving queerly again," she confided.

"Borrowing money?"

"He didn't ask me for any at luncheon time," she admitted. "He was looking dazed, though, and he scarcely spoke a word. I saw him again later in the afternoon coming out of Wedderburn's, the English solicitor's."

"Can't see how he could touch Wedderburn for anything," Mr. Billingham observed, thoughtfully.

"He changed his clothes some time ago," Madelon continued, "so when he does come out he will be ready for dinner—and here he is," she added. "Look at him, on the steps."

MR. BILLINGHAM glanced towards the Marquis, who was standing with his hands behind his back, gazing out across the gaily-lit Square—lit not only with those tree-shaded electric lights, but with the glamour of the moon, which was just showing from behind the hills. He stood for a moment like a man whose thoughts had wandered away. Then, with the utmost deliberation, he descended the steps and came towards them.

"I bet he's got it stiff," Mr. Billingham sighed. "I don't care. He can have what he wants from me to-night."

"Are you really so happy?" Madelon whispered.

"There's one thing——" he began.

Madelon withdrew her hand—not abruptly, even perhaps with some reluctance. A *sommelier* had invited Mr. Billingham's attention to the wine list, and before he had departed the Marquis had entered, nodded to them both, and taken his place. He drank the cocktail which was immediately presented to him, holding it for a moment a little away.

"Forgive me," he begged, as he set down his empty glass, "if my toast is a silent one. You will understand it better, perhaps, when I tell you that I have paid my last visit—my last visit as a gambler, that is to say—to that pleasing but grotesque-looking edifice opposite."

"I thought so," Mr. Billingham groaned.

The Marquis leaned a little forward, so that the few words he had to say could be heard by both his companions. His elbows rested lightly upon the table. His elegant finger-tips were pressed together.

"My farewell," he confided, "is not of the nature you imagine. To-day has been for me the wonderful day of which I have always dreamed. I entered the rooms at eleven o'clock this morning with the scanty remains of a mille note in my pocket. At luncheon time I deposited at the Crédit Lyonnais the sum of six hundred and fifty thousand francs. In the middle of the afternoon I handed to my solicitor a further

"To-day," the Marquis confided, "has been for me the wonderful day of which I have always dreamed."

sum of four hundred thousand francs. I have in my pocket—forgive the bulge, which I know is most unsightly—a further two hundred and eighty thousand francs."

Mr. Billingham and Madelon exchanged glances, their expressions instantly betraying one common thought. The Marquis smiled tolerantly. From his waistcoat-pocket he produced a banker's receipt to which was attached a receipt signed by Peter Wedderburn for the sum he had mentioned. From the breast-pocket of his coat he withdrew for an instant an enormous pile of mille notes.

"Systems," he declared, "will never win, or even hold their own, against the inevitable laws of chance. Inspiration may at times make any man a fortune. The only reason why over there they do not fear inspiration is because there is no man who wins by reason of it who does not lose by afterwards following a false one. To-day I have been inspired. I started with two modest *en pleins*. I found my numbers at every table.

I increased my stakes to maximums. I still won. In the 'Kitchen,' before lunch, I had broken every record known. I had had forty-two *en pleins* for my three numbers, three-quarters of which were in maximums. Not only the *en pleins*, mind you, but when I saw this great wave of fortune I let myself go. I heaped on the *carrés* and the *chevaux*. Nothing stopped me. At the first sign of slackening off, however, I buttoned up my pockets. I had been playing for two and a half hours only. I lunched without a word to Madelon. I visited the bank. I returned to the Cercle Privé with five milles in my pocket and no more. At twenty minutes past four I had won seventeen maximums on *en pleins* alone with many attendant stakes. I was being followed about, so that my progress became almost uncomfortable. For years they will talk of my fortune. The banks were closed, so I saw my friend Mr. Wedderburn, the lawyer, and deposited my money with him. Thereupon I changed my clothes and I returned to the Casino with five milles. I lost four and was preparing to leave. With the last mille I once more struck that amazing streak of luck. *En plein* followed *en plein*. Fourteen, for instance—on which I had the maximum with all the *carrés* and *chevaux*, the *transversal*, and the middle column—turned up four times following. You could have heard the roar from the centre table in the 'Kitchen,' outside in the Square. People left off playing at every table to see what was happening. Twenty minutes ago I lost three times following. I smiled. So often I have seen these huge winnings returned to where they came from. I could see it in the faces of the croupiers. I could feel it in the atmosphere. I smiled. I buttoned up my pockets. I lounged outside. I looked around at this beautiful scene. I strolled across here. I dine. Roulette with me is finished."

"This," Mr. Billingham declared, solemnly, "is the most amazing evening I have ever known."

THE MARQUIS talked on. He discussed his winnings calmly without the least trace of excitement.

"I have always felt this in my blood," he declared. "It is why I have been so persistent. But I will tell you a strange thing. My great fortune has done this for me. I am no longer a gambler. At the conclusion of our dinner this evening I am telegraphing to Paris to my old friend, General Hernais, who has three times lately begged me to share his apartment and his very pleasant life in Paris. I am in a position now to do so. I regret very much, my friend Billingham," he added, "to break up so our pleasant little companionship, but you will, I know, not blame me. For you, my dear Madelon," he concluded, "I shall make whatever arrangements appeal to you most strongly. I need not say that you will share to the fullest extent in my good fortune."

Madelon squeezed his hand.

"You are a dear, uncle," she said, a little vaguely. "I cannot tell you how glad I am."

"Confessions and new resolutions seem to be in the fashion," Mr. Billingham observed. "I will make one. You do not know, Marquis, although your niece does, that I have been married all these months of our acquaintance."

The Marquis was evidently disturbed. Mr. Billingham, however, continued without giving him an opportunity for speech.

"My wife," he went on, "has divorced me. We have not lived together for many years. Our temperaments were entirely different. Our marriage was a mistake, and my freedom is very welcome—especially as my late wife has found all the happiness she desires with another man. Furthermore, my position as an adventurer has been to a certain extent a fraud. All the things which go with adventures are in my blood and part of my life, but I sold out of my business a few months before I came here for a cash sum of over two million dollars, and I still have an interest in the firm."

"More than once I suspected it," the Marquis admitted, after a breathless pause. "You had never the appearance of a poor man, my friend Billingham."

Madelon's eyes were fixed upon her plate. For some reason or another Mr. Billingham's confession had seemed to be lacking in interest to her. Presently the Marquis took his departure. Mr. Billingham leaned across the table.

"Madelon," he said, a little hoarsely.

She raised her eyes and looked at him.

"It seems our partnership of three must come to an end," he continued. "Would you—would it be possible—to start a partnership of two?"

The surroundings were very wonderful, even inspiring. The moon now was clear of the hills, and the faintest of breezes brought the perfume of the flowers from the gardens, and even of the orange-blossom from beyond, across the Square. The orchestra was playing in the *café*. It was all very beautiful, but the most beautiful thing that Mr. Billingham had ever seen in his life was the strange softness in Madelon's eyes and the little quiver of her lips.

"Couldn't we have coffee in your *salon*, and then walk along the Terrace and talk about it?" she whispered.

THE END.

# A Trial Run

By

# ROLAND PERTWEE

*ILLUSTRATED By L. G. ILLINGWORTH*

IT all came about through Moyra Swift being crossed in love. The crossing was not as rough as some, but in Moyra's opinion it was the worst of its kind.

Moyra had the soul of a democrat and a rich father.

Dick had the soul of an aristocrat and an even richer father.

You will find Dick in the telephone book under the letter B: Blayney, Hon. Richard.

The Hon. Richard Blayney and Moyra Swift started by kissing each other and passed by rapid synthesis to a state of war. The *casus belli* was the obligation of both sexes to justify their existence by work. Moyra insisted that it was Dick's obvious duty to work. Dick insisted that she was all wrong about it.

"Why am I wrong?" demanded Moyra. "Because I know I am not wrong."

Dick paused to admire the Dorothy Perkins colouring wooed to her cheeks by the emotion of anger, and said:—

"Because, sweetest heart of all, I've pots of cash and it would be a low trick to take a job when there are scores of beggars who are broke."

"They're only broke because they refuse to work," said Moyra.

It was the kind of remark her father collected from leading articles and broadcasted as original.

"Oh, stodge!" said Dick. "That's awful stodge, darling."

"It's not stodge and I'm not darling—at least to you I'm not. I adore the proletariat, but the idle proletariat deserves no pity, none whatever. Life is a battle——"

"Half a minute while I roll in the tub," Dick interrupted.

"How dare you make me angry!"

"'Life is a battle,'" he quoted.

"It is," she countered, "and I believe in the survival of the fittest."

But the only philosophy with which Dick concerned himself was natural selection.

"Let's get married first and see which of us survives," he suggested.

"Marry—you!" said Moyra, with scorn.

Dick assured her he would not dream of proposing for anyone else.

"Marry a mollusc—never!"

"I didn't mention a mollusc, beautiful one, couldn't even spell it. Let's get married and have a good time."

Said Moyra: "A good time is all you think about or are fit for. I want a man who is not afraid of suffering."

"Tell you what, then. I'll go out and sprain my ankle and we'll be married before it gets better. That do?"

"I hate you with a horrible contempt."

"Darling!"

"I loathe the very ground you stand upon." (It was a genuine Aubusson carpet.) "If you loved me as you pretend, you'd do what I ask. You'd buckle on a sword and look for a job."

"Opening tins?" he suggested.

"You're detestable," cried Moyra. "When I think I ever let you kiss me I could die of shame." There was an interval while tears were shed, which, submissively, she allowed Dick to dry with kisses. "Oh, Dick, I *am* fond of you, but promise you'll do what I ask."

Dick put his hands in his pockets.

"But, pretty heart, it's all against my principles. Besides, if I give in to you now, what hope is there for me after marriage?"

"You refuse?" Her eyes blazed challengingly.

"It's all such rot."

"Then I never want to see you again. If *you* won't work, *I* will. *I will.*"

"Oh, come!" said Dick.

"Come. I'm going—for good."



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And she went—and no one could stop her.

On the day of departure her father read her a letter from one of the daily papers with the caption :—

" What Are Our Daughters Coming To ? "

It would have been more to the point to ask where his particular daughter was going to. She left no address. Moyra was a girl of determination. What she said she meant.

After she had gone the Hon. Richard experienced the sensations of blight. It dawned upon him that he had acted like a crashing fool and that it might be as well to do something about it.

Which he did.

MEANWHILE Moyra bought a blue serge frock with no sleeves and went to look for work. And the manager of Denver, Wallis, and Carboy, Ltd., pinched the dimple above the elbow of her right arm and gave her a distaste for the quest.

Further experiences of a similar kind finally discouraged her from seeking employment in the City and caused her to accept the post of secretary to Mr. Franklin Venables, late of Mincing Lane, E.C., now retired to a small estate near Woking.

Mr. Venables had sound commercial principles and sound views on life. Everything about him was sound—heart, lungs, banking account, and wife. His voice also was sound, if a little too much so. He had one sound son at a sound Public School. The family from which he was derived was the least sound of his possessions. He had risen superior to his surroundings, on which account he desired his surroundings to adopt an appropriate superiority. Moyra being a Swift—and who has not heard of the Swifts of Suffolk ?—supplied that air of superiority his *ménage* demanded.

Her qualifications as a secretary weighed less with him than her ancestry. In capturing her he felt he had captured a bit of county stock.

Moyra's inability to use a typewriter or to take down in shorthand did not affect his choice. She was exceedingly pretty and very well bred, which more than compensated for lack of skill as a stenographer.

The hours spent in the study passed the more pleasantly for her society. He would tell her all the clever things he had done in Mincing Lane—and she would listen—a grave expression on her face—hands folded in lap—eyes fixed on the lime trees outside the window.

It was awfully nice.

Mr. Venables thought she was the most intelligent listener he had ever met. He was unaware, of course, that she was not listening at all, but was thinking of her hunters—her dogs—and that bad, bad Hon. Richard who was spending a life in ease and idleness while she worked her fingers to the bone.

Every half-hour or so Mrs. Venables popped her head round the door to satisfy herself they had everything they wanted. It is sometimes difficult to explain such constant visits, but Mrs. Venables was never at a loss.

" Plenty of ink and paper ? " she would ask—little sentences to prove how genuinely disinterested she was.

Mrs. Venables knew she could trust her husband—and that he was not like other men—but this did not prevent her from behaving like other women.

No one realized that Moyra had a secret sorrow, and was eating her heart out because she had been crossed in love.

Then one day Tony Venables came back from the sound Public School and the Rolls went down to the station to meet him.

The Rolls returned without him, and with the announcement that rather than travel in a car with four doors and glass sides he preferred to walk.

Tony Venables, aged sixteen, held very resolute opinions on the matter of motor-cars. They were his subject—a subject which inflamed him to Parnassian heights of admiration or depths of withering contempt. Limousines, saloons, covered coupés —voiturettes de ville—all-weather bodies, and even cars with side curtains were to him anathema. Such vehicles as these were only fit to die in. His parents' purchase of a Rolls-Royce induced a state of melancholy in Tony's mind that a whole park of three-litre high efficiency copper-exhaust-piped Grand Prix racers would have failed to banish.

Fuggy brutes to go along the road with a roof over their heads ! For the money they had spent on this glass palace—this drawing-room on wheels—a fleet of little " sports " buses might have been theirs. Gosh ! It was unpardonable—degrading, as he had said to his father.

" Sports and I'll sport with you—Rolls and you roll alone."

He thanked Heaven for the possession of a three and a half-h.p. " stink wheel " that would make knots and you could get dirty on.

Tony Venables walked from the station, having bought at the bookstall copies of all the motoring and wireless journals. He had planned for himself a thoroughly mechanical holiday. Every hour of every day was accounted for in advance. It would be useless for his parents to attempt to take him anywhere or offer diversions. This he would explain at once, that they might thus avoid disappointment. While daylight lasted he would be in his workshop. The evening

would be spent writing to various motor agents for catalogues. Yes—yes—a hectic time awaited him. Within half an hour he would have donned dungarees and be at work stripping down the motor-bike, preparatory to "hotting her up."

It would be a great convenience if his mother would consent to serve his meals in the workshop. Perhaps it could be arranged. He must see.

A resonant roar intruded upon his meditations. A yellow tornado bulleted past at the speed of a falling star. It had tilted wings, a knife-edged rad., no running boards, no screen, a wind deflector, an asbestos-bound outside exhaust, and a streamline canoe-shaped body.

"Golly!" said Tony Venables. "It's the new Gaston-Potin 36–98 sports. What a peach—what a daisy! Oh, num!"

Tony continued on his way gravely considering the science of speed.

"I'll do it," he said. "I'll risk it. I'll drill holes in the con. rod. Dashed if I don't."

Up the gravel drive to the house he marched and through the open front door.

Standing in the hall was a girl—the most exquisite girl ever beheld of mortal eye.

"Mr. and Mrs. Venables have gone to attend a sale," said Moyra, "but they'll be back at one punctually, they said I was to say."

She smiled sadly and disappeared.

The papers slipped from Tony's arms.

"Num!" he gasped, and never before had he applied that superlative of praise to any creation that was not wrought of steel or iron.

INSTEAD of hastening into his dungarees and hiking off to the workshop, Tony Venables made tracks for the bathroom, where he washed himself with a thoroughness and attention to detail unrivalled by previous effort. Also he anointed his hair with pink brilliantine, bagged one of his father's ties, and put on a clean collar.

While at the work of grooming, Tony abandoned himself to speculation. The vision of loveliness in the hall below could be none other than his father's new secretary. She was the Swift of Suffolk referred to in his mother's letters as "a quiet young lady with such nice ways."

"Golly," thought Tony, "she's something better than that."

Romance, until now a stranger, rapidly invaded Tony's enthusiastic soul.

With the ready acquiescence of youth he admitted to himself that he was in love—at first sight and for the first and last time. It was pretty swift work, but Tony was not embarrassed by the discovery. One need not be ashamed of falling in love. It was a highly enviable state. Of course, it would involve severe changes in his habit of living. His plans for spending the holiday would have to be jettisoned. But no matter. Personal considerations take precedence of mechanical. Tony Venables gave his shoes a swift burnish with his mother's night-dress case and went downstairs.

He found Moyra in the drawing-room. She was staring thoughtfully at the lime trees. Her expression was grave and sad and beautiful.

A glorious conviction smote Tony that she, too, was love's victim, and that in their brief encounter in the hall Cupid's dart had smitten her as surely as it had smitten him.

There was no other explanation.

Tony stared and trembled. Moyra continued to look at the lime trees and to think of the Hon. Richard.

The silence was too sacred to be broken.

Tony searched his brain for poetry—a fragile and beautiful line wherewith to make his presence known. Alas! his knowledge of poetry was restricted to limericks. It would not be effective to declaim:—

"There was an old maid of South Shields."

The references to love in this particular verse were rather to its disparagement than otherwise.

Quite suddenly he sneezed. A loud, reverberant "Ha tashoo!"

Moyra jumped and laughed in a startled way, and said:—

"You are a brute to do that."

Tony coloured.

"Sorry," he replied. "Didn't mean to. I often sneeze at this time of year. It's the grass. Pollen, you know. Hay fever. I get hay fever."

He had a vague hope that her sympathies might be aroused in beholding the victim of a dreaded disease.

"Oh! I thought you were trying to make me jump."

"No fear," said Tony, and for want of a supplementary thought repeated, "No fear."

His courtship was proceeding none too well. Of course it was possible she might detect an underlying tenderness in his resolve not to make her jump, but the chances were remote. On the whole it might be better to make a fresh start from a more conventional basis and work up to a closer understanding.

"Do you like closed cars?" he asked.

"Not much," said Moyra. "Why—do you?"

"Me? I loathe 'em. I loathe 'em. Ever been in a racing bus?"

Moyra started. Racing cars had been rather a stunt of Richard's. The question

revived thoughts of him. With an expression of infinite longing she gazed at the lime trees and, biting her lower lip, nodded. Tony felt encouraged.

"What sort, I say?"

Moyra named about six mile-devouring monsters. Tony's eyes goggled.

"Coo! Have you really? By jing! Do you still go in any of those?"

Moyra shook her head and sighed. With astonishing agility Tony interpreted the sigh.

"Bad luck," he said. "Must be pretty foul for you, missing all that."

"How clever of you to realize it!" she said, and her eyes brightened.

A terrific idea stirred in Tony's brain. A plot almost too wild to contemplate, but for the fact that where love is nothing is impossible. With amazing luck, in half-a-dozen sentences he had discovered the real cause of her melancholy. This lonely maiden, robbed of the wealth that once was hers and driven by necessity to accept humble employment, yearned for the speed she could no longer command—for the roar of wind in her ears—the streaking hedges, and the thunder of mighty engines.

Was ever before such complete affinity between any two persons?

And there was no one save himself in all the world who could make good her losses—repair her broken spirit and win back the light of happiness to her grief-stricken eyes. Yes, it was up to him and he would not fail. Rather tentatively, he remarked:—

"I've a mo-bike that can shift a bit."

Moyra's expression dulled again, and he hastened to add:—

"Though after that heavy stuff you wouldn't think much of motor-bikes, would you?"

Kindness prompted the answer:—

"They're all right."

"But not the same, eh?"

"Not quite, perhaps."

A retrospective vision of the Hon. Richard crouched over the wheel of a Sherringham Bland, of herself tucked against his shoulder, and of the world ahead disappearing into the dust behind, awoke in Moyra's face a look of complete loveliness.

Tony's enthusiasm fired.

"How would you like to have the past back?" he asked, trembling with eagerness.

"Not much hope of that."

"But funny things do happen sometimes."

Moyra looked at him queerly.

"Why do you talk like that?"

"Because," he began, and funked it, "because—oh! I don't know. I was thinking, that's all. Must be frightfully slow for you here?"

"No; they're very kind."

"But you can't help missing things."

"Of course one can't."

"Look here," said Tony, "do you trust me?"

"Yes. I suppose so," she said, but without much interest.

"Then—then I'm going to tell you something."

"Well?"

He hesitated.

"No, no. P'r'aps I'd better not say anything yet—except this—you can safely leave it all to me."

"Leave what to you?"

"Why, the job of—the job of—well, you'll see. I'm a man of my word, and when I tackle a job I get it done."

"Thank you," said Moyra, and for want of a better idea gravely put a hand into his.

IN Tony's opinion, based on the sound authority of the Upper Sixth Remove, this was the moment for a complete man to take the maiden in his arms and seal his faith and duty with a kiss. His failure to do so was traceable to two causes.

A. Inexperience and a humiliating rebellion of nerves.

B. The sound of his mother's voice crying aloud from somewhere adjacent:—

"Where's my baby? Tony boy, where are you?"

His indignant reply, "Oh, here," was less understandable from a parental point of view than from an outsider's.

As Mr. Venables remarked a minute later:—

"Come. Come. Hardly the way to speak to your mother, is it?"

Mr. Venables was a corrective man, and he liked best to make his corrections in public. By this means a larger number of persons realized his authority.

At lunch he even corrected Moyra Swift of Suffolk—just to show what he could do if he wished. It was a genial sort of correction.

"Not finished those letters yet? Well, well, you'll get them done this afternoon, no doubt."

Lunch over, Moyra retreated to the study to poke forth two words a minute on the typewriter and punch holes for full-stops.

Left to his own devices, Tony drifted off to the garden, where he stared at the pinks and considered the future.

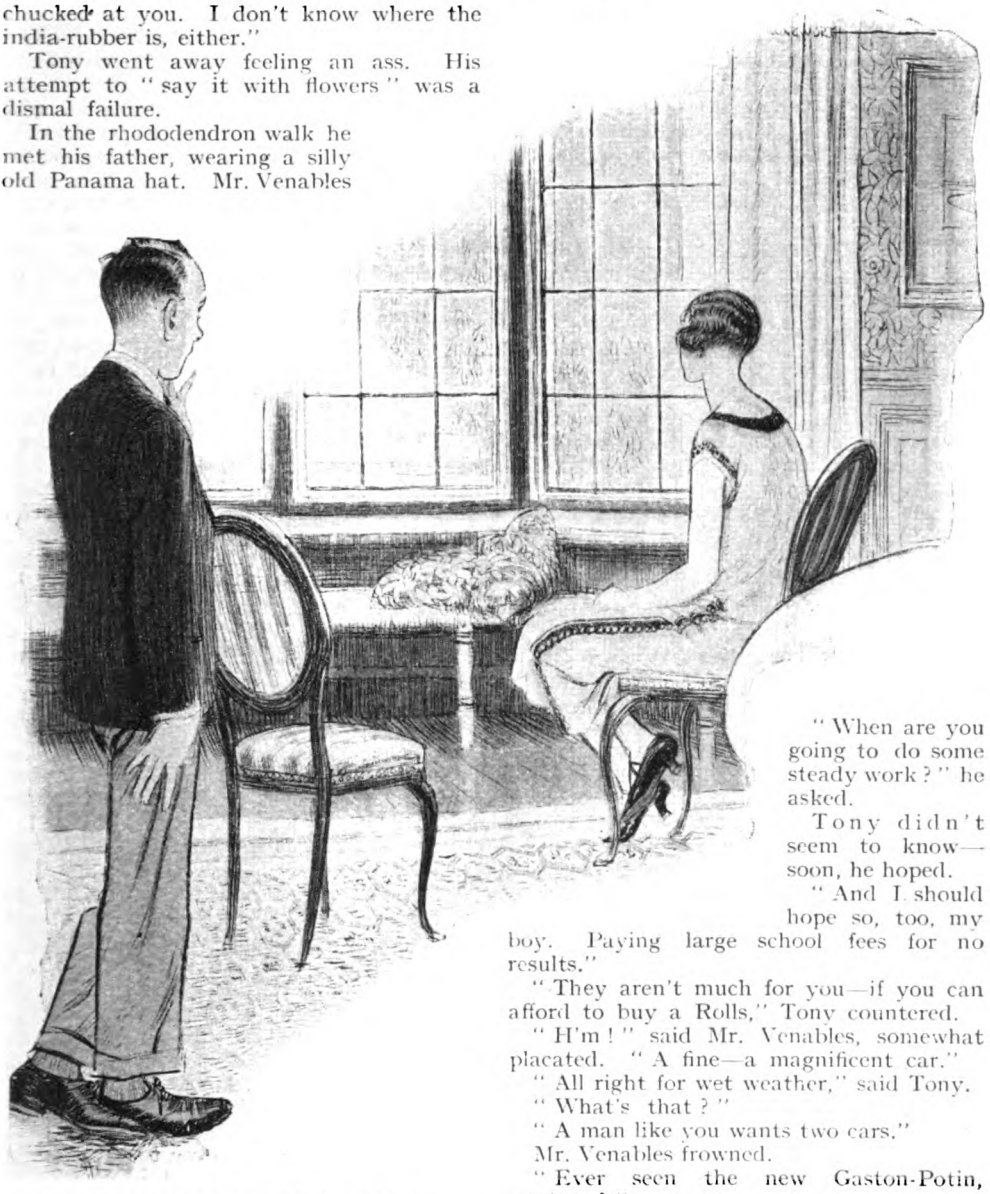
Presently he picked a pink and, tiptoeing across the lawn, cast it through the study window. It struck Moyra in the eye, causing her to get into a muddle with the shift keys. The word "dear" came out %3@4.

"Do shut up!" she said. "It's rotten enough doing this without having things

chucked at you. I don't know where the india-rubber is, either."

Tony went away feeling an ass. His attempt to "say it with flowers" was a dismal failure.

In the rhododendron walk he met his father, wearing a silly old Panama hat. Mr. Venables was reading his school report with a gravity proper to the occasion.



**Tony stared and trembled. Moyra continued to look at the lime trees.**

"This is a disappointing document, Anthony. Most disappointing. I wonder you cared to bring it home."

"No choice. Had to," said Tony. "They're awful rot, those things. I'd chuck it away if I were you."

Mr. Venables folded the report and put it in a pocket of his alpaca coat.

"When are you going to do some steady work?" he asked.

Tony didn't seem to know—soon, he hoped.

"And I should hope so, too, my boy. Paying large school fees for no results."

"They aren't much for you—if you can afford to buy a Rolls," Tony countered.

"H'm!" said Mr. Venables, somewhat placated. "A fine—a magnificent car."

"All right for wet weather," said Tony.

"What's that?"

"A man like you wants two cars."

Mr. Venables frowned.

"Ever seen the new Gaston-Potin, guv'nor?"

"I have not and don't intend to."

"But one ought to see everything, don't you agree? I've often heard you say so, I mean."

"Nonsense."

"But there's no obligation to buy." Tony was speaking from the book in the pure poetry of the publicity department. "These ads. say: 'Why not let Colonel Oxendon give you a trial run? I am so confident in the power and excellence of this superb machine that I have no hesitation in exposing it to any test, any time, anywhere, any

day. Colonel Oxendon will prove to you what motoring means.'"

"He'll do no such thing," Mr. Venables declared.

"Are you content to be behind the times, when at the cost of a postage-stamp you can be ahead of the future?" Tony demanded, oratorically. "The Gaston-Potin is to other cars what the wagon-lit is to the farm wagon."

"The head master says your failure to concentrate accounts for the low position you hold in your form."

"But, guv'nor," Tony urged, "you don't want for ever to be changing gears. The unrivalled flexibility of the Gaston-Potin offers a smooth range of speed from five to ninety-five m.p.h. on top. Think what that means to *you*." He flung out a hand and pointed an accusing finger at his father.

"Don't do that—don't point! I won't have it—and stop this silly talk at once."

"Let's have one down, guv'nor, and try it."

"Silence!" roared Mr. Venables.

"Let's see it—that's all. You needn't buy the thing. If you funk going in it, I could have a beat round with Miss—Miss Swift."

"Miss Swift? How do you mean? D'you think I'm going to have my secretary careering round the countryside in a juggernaut? Never heard such blither."

Tony abandoned the character of motor salesman and became a psychologist.

"But suppose it's necessary, guv'nor. Suppose she must have a run in a Gaston-Potin. Suppose her happiness depends upon it."

"My boy," was the reply, "in my young days, if a fellow talked as you are talking, he would have been thought up the pole."

Mr. Venables was fond of reviving bits of extinct slang. In his opinion it marked him as a modern.

But Tony had gone too far to retreat.

"So," he cried, "you think you've the right to keep her shut up like—like a beast in a cage?"

Mr. Venables stared at his son in dismay.

"Have you taken leave of your wits?" he demanded. "What's the meaning of this wild talk? And why refer to Miss Swift? What has Miss Swift to do with you?"

Rather lamely Tony stammered:—

"It's up to you to play the game."

"Knuckle-bones!" retorted Mr. Venables. "Knuckle-bones! I'm not a fool. D'you imagine I can't see through your little game, my boy? I can—emphatically. You've one of these wild racing ideas in your head. You want to go out in an infernal machine and kick up a lot of dust, and because you lack the courage to ask on your own account, you invent this tomfoolery about Miss Swift."

"Guv'nor!"

"Don't interrupt, but listen to me. Miss Swift is my secretary, and I won't have her work interfered with. You're my son and I'll have obedience from you. If you make any further effort to persist in this absurd discussion I'll stop your pocket money—from the word 'go.' Understand that—and I'll confiscate your motor-bicycle into the bargain."

With a fine sense of the theatre, Mr. Venables gave his silly old Panama hat a downward tweak and marched off in the direction of the house.

FOR a moment Tony Venables stood irresolute, then swung on his heel and crashed irresistibly through the rhododendron bushes. In a little clearing—secure from mortal eye—he flung himself on the warm earth and beat it with his fists. Earwigs, centipedes, and a colony of small red ants organized a hasty exodus from the afflicted area. A solitary wasp, marking the disturbance, paused in his flight and stung Tony with precision.

The stab of physical pain, following so swiftly the rack of mental torment, for the moment bade fair to unman the gallant youth. He sucked the back of his hand where the wasp had alighted and gasped, jerkily:—

"It's a b-brutal s-shame. A b-b-brutal shame."

He saw very clearly that the world was an evil place, ruled by an intolerable injustice. Here was he, but three hours a lover, being treated like a naughty child by all and sundry. Even his Heart's Delight had told him to shut up and go away. He forgave his Heart's Delight, for no one is very amiable after being hit in the eye. But his father he could not forgive. He could not forgive the way he had bullied Moyra—the way he insisted on keeping her shut up like a prisoner—his refusal even to see a Gaston-Potin—and finally the threats of confiscation.

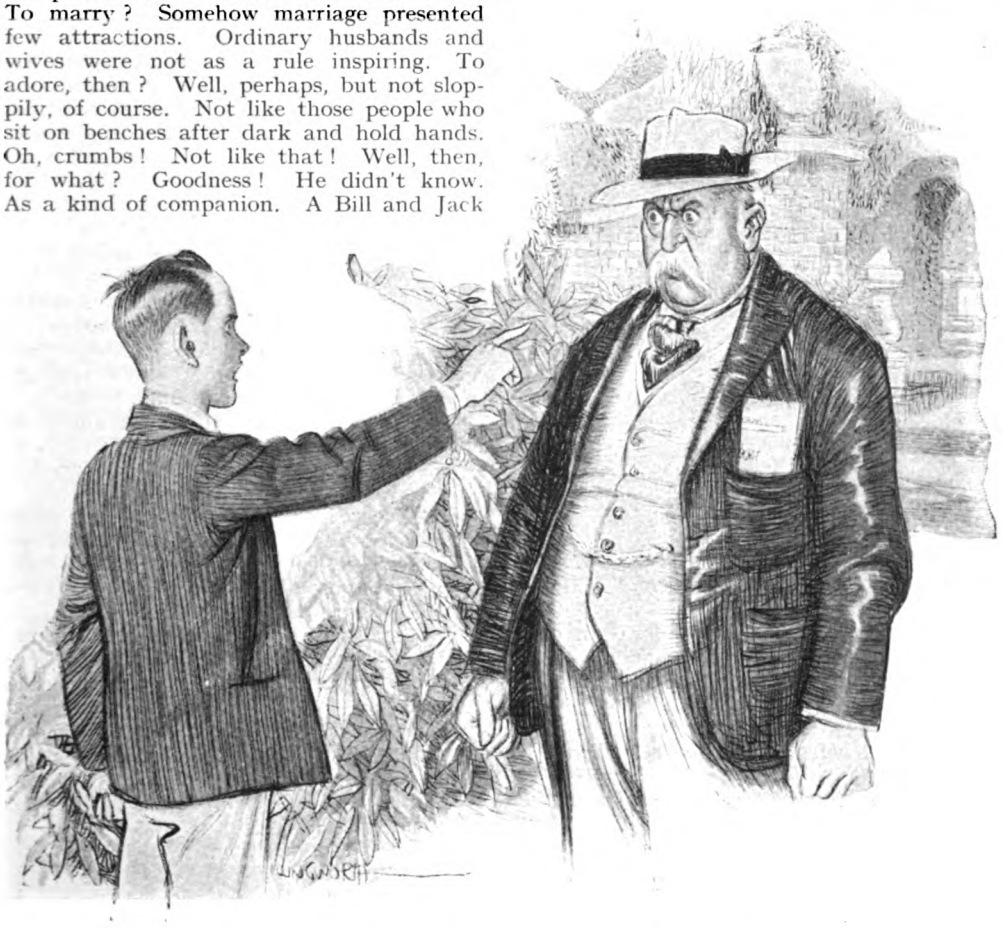
That he would keep the threats Tony did not doubt. Mr. Venables was no idle talker. He had done it before and would do it again. It followed, therefore, if he, Tony, were to fulfil his promise to Moyra and revive the laughter in her eyes, that he must do so at his peril. It is not an agreeable prospect for a fellow to be without cash for the long vacation—to say nothing of the loss of a motor-bike. But life is a battle—and battles are a barter of certain losses for uncertain gains. Suppose he abandoned his efforts in the matter of the Gaston-Potin, was it likely Moyra would

have anything more to do with him? No, it was not likely. Their brief acquaintance had proved conclusively that only by the provision of speed her affections might be won.

If she was to be his—speed must be hers. Nothing else would serve.

His. How vague but how entrancing the possessive sounded! His. For what? To marry? Somehow marriage presented few attractions. Ordinary husbands and wives were not as a rule inspiring. To adore, then? Well, perhaps, but not sloppily, of course. Not like those people who sit on benches after dark and hold hands. Oh, crumbs! Not like that! Well, then, for what? Goodness! He didn't know. As a kind of companion. A Bill and Jack by Boy Scouts becoming entangled with the legs of pedestrians. By a strange mischance the letter, which was destined for the editor of a prominent morning paper, opened with the words "Darling Di¾k."

Since Tony's arrival that morning, Moyra could not banish Dick from her mind. He obsessed her. Idle and worthless he might



"Don't do that—don't point! I won't have it."

sort of companionship. Someone to tear along the road with, someone to crack nuts with her teeth and take the silver paper off the butter-scotch while he "de-coked" the motor-bike. Yes—and no.

Tony's mind was made up. The future, indistinct though it might be in form and outline, was attractive enough to justify the risk. He sat up, hugged his knees, and began to plot.

Meanwhile Moyra was in the study typing out a fair copy of Mr. Venables' views on the grave risks of the jumping poles carried be, but he obsessed her. It was useless to pretend that she did not love him. It was useless to pretend that she could resist the temptation to fly back to his laughing embraces very much longer.

"I must—I must," she said, and beat out the last lines of the letter.

"8t is highh time this %angerous Practise ¾hould be put a stop to. Ever and ever Byour loving ;oyra."

A face, Tony's, appeared at the window.

"I say, you done with the typewriter?"

**"Remember our trade slogan—Any time, any place, anywhere."**

Moyra nodded. Tony nipped in over the sill and pulled down the blind.

"Better be out of this," he said, darkly.

"Why, what's up?"

"Can't say, but I'll give you a hint. D'you know what you'd like best in all the world?"

"Course I do," said Moyra, rather irritably.

"Well, you're going to have that. Not another word—off you go."

Moyra went. Tony tugged a copy of *The Brooklands Gazette* from his pocket and whipped over a dozen sheets and studied an address on one of the advertisements.

"Ah!" he said, and squared up to the typewriter.

Later he strolled down to the pillar-box with a letter in his pocket.

Tony's conduct the following day was peculiar. He spent the afternoon hovering near the garden gate, and at five-thirty he brought in the evening mail. He delivered it to his parents with an air of suspicious innocence—whistling, humming, and rattling his feet. This done, he vanished in the direction of the rhododendron bushes. In this leafy solitude he opened a letter addressed to his father.

The letter said in warm and heartening phrases that as Colonel Oxendon was abroad testing the new Alpine model on the Hautes-Pyrénées, one of the directors would be charmed to demonstrate the Gaston-Potin to Mr. Venables.

"The car will be at your house at 11 a.m. precisely to-morrow, the 30th inst. We note that you wish the super sports model to be sent and have arranged accordingly."

Tony slipped out of the garden by the back way and hared for the post-office. It was a longish run, and he arrived only seven minutes before closing time.

As luck would have it he got his toll call without delay.

"That Regent 98988?"

A pleasant voice said it was.

"Gaston-Potin, Albemarle Street?"

"That's so."

"This is Mr. Tony, I mean Anthony Venables, speaking for his father, of Woking, Mr. Franklin Venables, who wrote to you yesterday and's just got your reply saying you would."

"Can we have it once more and a bit slower?" said the pleasant voice.

Tony decelerated and fixed his identity.

"Yes, I get you."

"The point is," said Tony, "our house is so jolly hard to find you'd better not try."

"Not come?"

"No fear; not try to find it, I mean."

"I see," said the pleasant voice. "You'd like us just to stick around till it finds us, eh? What sort of house is it when it comes along?"

This chap was a card—a real funny merchant—but Tony was in deadly earnest. Too much was at stake for jest.

"I mean we'd better meet in some place we both know."

"Give it a name, then."

Tony meditated.

"How about the lunatic asylum?" he proposed.

There was a snuffle of laughter.

"Just the spot."

"Look here," said Tony. "This is dashed serious, you know."

"That's all right. Lunatic asylum at eleven sharp."

"It *is* all right? No kidding?"

"Course. Remember our trade slogan—Any time, any place, anywhere."

"That's topping. I've great hopes of persuading my guv'nor to buy one of your buses."

"Good egg," said the voice. "Till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow, sir," said Tony.

If Tony's behaviour had been strange

during the afternoon, it was stranger at breakfast the following morning. He was bubbling with an almost irrepressible excitement. In his eagerness to pass the toast to his father he knocked a dish of apples right across the table. His conversation, too, was unaccountable. He asked Moyra if she was interested in churches. She supposed she was, but did not seem enthusiastically sure.

"You seen our church?" he asked.

"No."

"You ought to—oughtn't she, mother? The font's absolutely num, and there's a tophole graveyard, if you care about that sort of thing."

Moyra seemed mystified. Mr. Venables invited Tony not to be an ass.

"But you often say we ought to see everything, guv'nor."

"Miss Swift has her work to do, my boy."

"But we could rush there and back, I mean needn't stop long."

Mr. Venables began to shake his head.

Help came from an unexpected quarter —from Mrs. Venables.

"I think it would be quite nice if Miss Swift would like to go."

"But I don't in the least want to go," said Moyra. Then, intercepting a meaningful glare from Tony, added, "except that one ought to see all the churches one can."

"Then it's arranged," said Mrs. Venables. "Tony shall take her for a walk. It will be a nice change for you both not to be shut up together in that room all the morning."

As they passed from the dining-room, Tony whispered in Moyra's ear :—

"Shove a veil in your pocket. 'Sh! not a word."

At a quarter to eleven they walked down the road, so to speak, finger on lip. By the pillar-box Moyra halted, to ask :—

"What's all this about, and where are you taking me?"

"Hush! To the asylum," said Tony in an impressive whisper.

Moyra said "Pig" and faced homeward.

"Look here," said Tony, clutching her arm. "You promised to trust me. It's a bit thick to call me a pig when I'm risking all in your service."

"I never said I wanted to be served."

"But I'd discovered your secret, hadn't I?"

"No; how could you?"

"Time will prove," said Tony, in block characters carved on stone. He added, "I shall give you back the past."

But Moyra was in an unsensitized mood.

"You can't, so what's the good of pretending you can? And what's the meaning of this nonsense about risking all?"

**"That's topping. I've great hopes of persuading my guv'nor to buy one of your buses."**

"It's jolly well true. I am."

"What are you risking?"

"Liberty, fortune, and my good name."

Moyra sniffed and tossed her head.

"I believe it's just a silly practical joke. Anyway, why should you risk anything?"

"For—for you."

"Why?"

"If you don't know," said Tony, "all I can say is—is—find out."

It was not perhaps a very lover-like speech, but a fellow doesn't care to be jostled into showing which way his affections lead.

The walk was continued in silence until at last they came to an open space, with a large building at one end. Before the gates was drawn up a huge yellow car with trade number plates. At the wheel, his back towards them, sat a man. He wore a leather helmet and goggles. The storm-collar of his great-coat covered his ears.

Tony stopped and pointed.

"There. See? He's come. It was my doing. I got it here—for your sake. When it comes out, I'm done for. Heaven knows what the guv'nor will say to me. But I don't care. Rather than see you unhappy

I'd have written to every racing firm in the world."

"But, Tony——"

"No, don't thank me. I don't want thanks. I only want you to see that for your sake no suffering could be too great to sacrifice. The other way round I mean. Stop here and I'll give you a shout."

Leaving Moyra, he raced to the yellow car and stopped breathless beside it.

"Hullo!" said the driver. "You the sportsman who rang me up last night?"

"I'm Anthony Venables, sir."

"I see. Where's your father?"

Tony blushed. Now for the lie.

"Matter of fact, he had to attend a—meeting—of—lots of important friends at Guildford, and asked if you'd flip me over there and fetch him, d'you see?"

The pleasant man stretched his mouth lengthways.

"What a very curious thing!" said he.

"Jolly bad luck, sir, but if you wouldn't mind——"

"Oh, jump in," said the pleasant man.

Tony hesitated.

"It'd be awfully decent if you'd let my—my companion come with me."

"But there's only one extra seat, and if——"

"She could come back on the guv'nor's return half, sir."

"She—so your companion's a she?"

"Yes."

The pleasant man scratched his chin.

"Seems queer, as your father expected to be fetched, that he should have bought a return ticket."

"Not a bit; he has a season, sir."

The pleasant man pushed up his goggles and looked at Tony with steady eyes and a twitching mouth.

"Youngster," he said, "how about just a spot of truth for a change? I don't doubt you're a first-class sportsman, but you're a very third-rate liar."

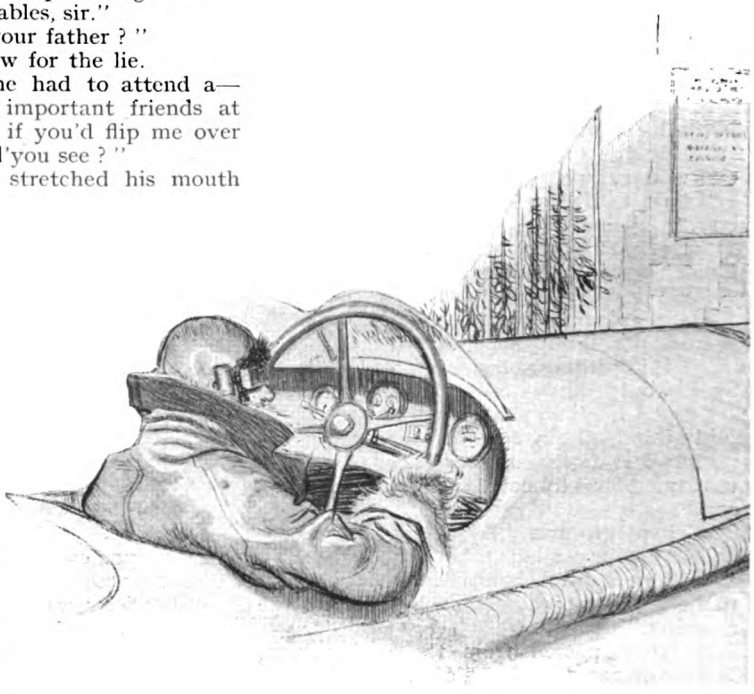
Tony's lower lip quivered.

"I know it was a low down trick, sir, but I swear I wouldn't have done it for myself. You see, she was in distress and it was the only way. She used to go in cars like this, but now she's cooped up in my father's study all day long writing rotten letters. I had to do it to show how much I—I—I'd do for her. It was my only chance."

The pleasant man took a decision.

"Have her along," he said. "I know something of blighted hopes, my son, and if this run can do anything to cure 'em, I'm your man."

"And you won't split to the guv'nor? Dying oath!"



"Dying oath. Produce the lady."

He let down his goggles with a snap and squared to the wheel.

Tony lifted a great shout.

When Moyra came she was quite fluttery.

"I'm afraid there's been a misunderstanding," she said, addressing the leather figure at the wheel. "I'm afraid——" and stopped. "Dick!"

"Moyra! MOYRA!"

They stared and stared. Tony stared too. Then Moyra swooped round on him, and, putting her hands on his shoulders, kissed him twice.

" Tony, you wonderful boy—how did you guess—how could you possibly know ? "

She would have said more, but she was dragged back into another pair of arms. She was saying :—

" Dick, you're working——" when the sound of her voice was smothered.

Of course, it happened at the gates of a lunatic asylum, where strange sights are not infrequent.

To Tony, standing alone on the pavement, the world seemed an empty place, an aching void, until into it came two people who punched or kissed him, according to their sex, and told him what a magician he was.

It was lonely, too, in the back seat of the car with the two huddled figures in front and the road unwinding beneath the wheels.

Infinitely lost and sad he felt sitting there forgotten while those two remembered. Between their heads two white dials shone from the facia board — the rev. counter and the speedometer. The restless needles steadily compassed the circles. Twenty—twenty-five—thirty—forty miles an hour.

The dreary expanses of life unaccountably seemed less dreary for the gathering speed.

But what was there left to live for ?

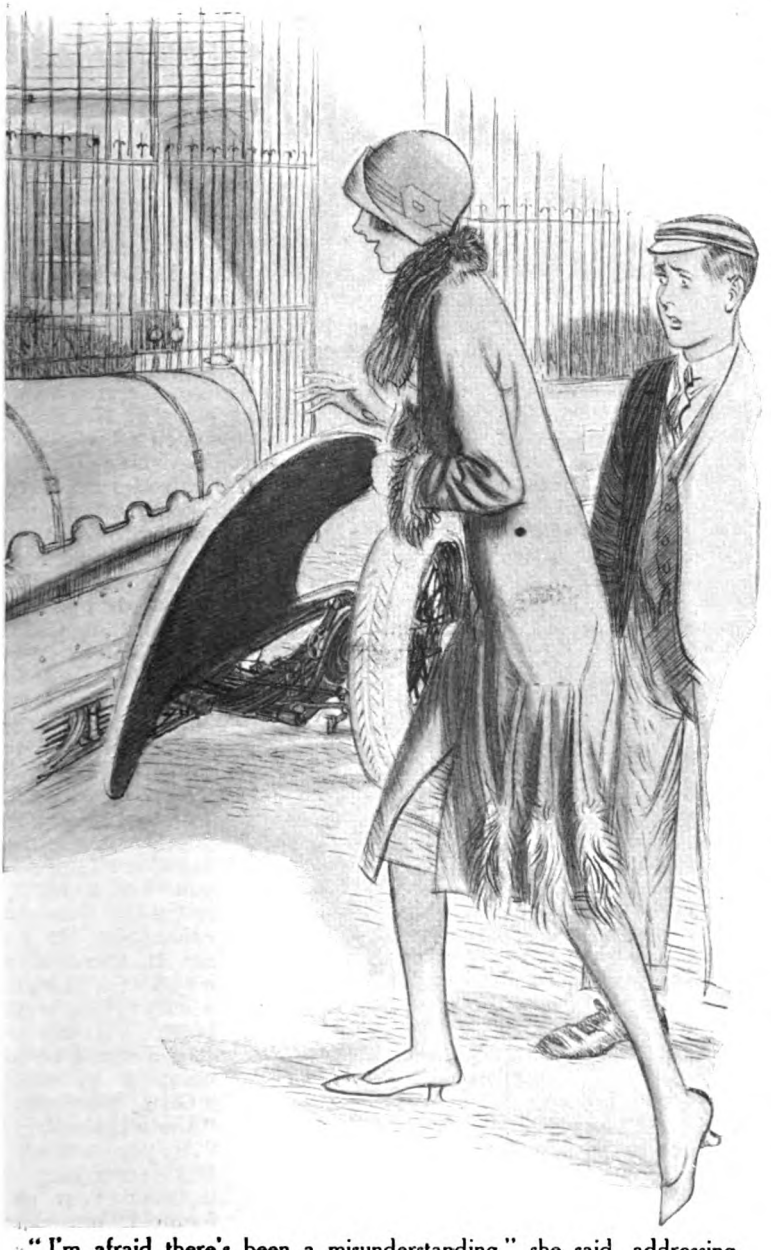
Fifty—fifty-five — sixty.

Tony leant forward, for the heads in front were obscuring the dials.

Seventy - seven — eighty - one — four—six. Would the needle touch the ninety mark ? Would it ?—could it ?

Ninety-two !

" Num ! ' shouted Tony.



" I'm afraid there's been a misunderstanding," she said, addressing the leather figure at the wheel.

# The Humorist—An Exposure

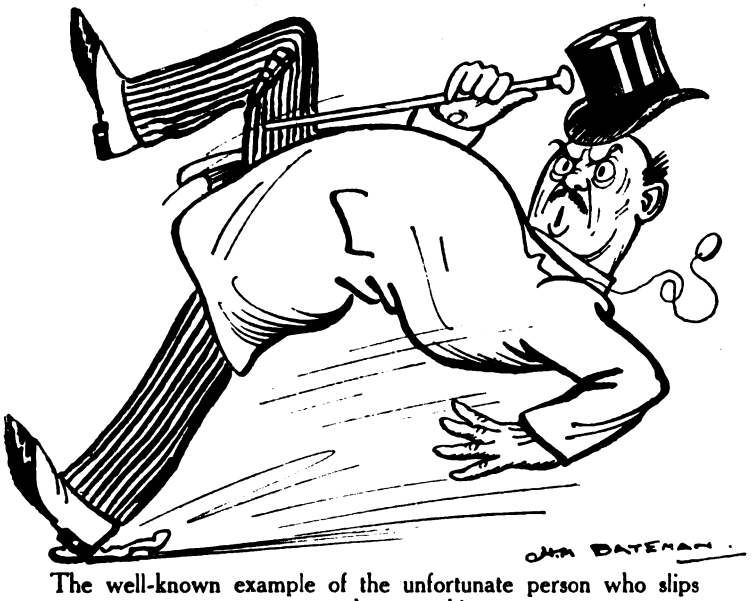
By

# H. M. BATEMAN

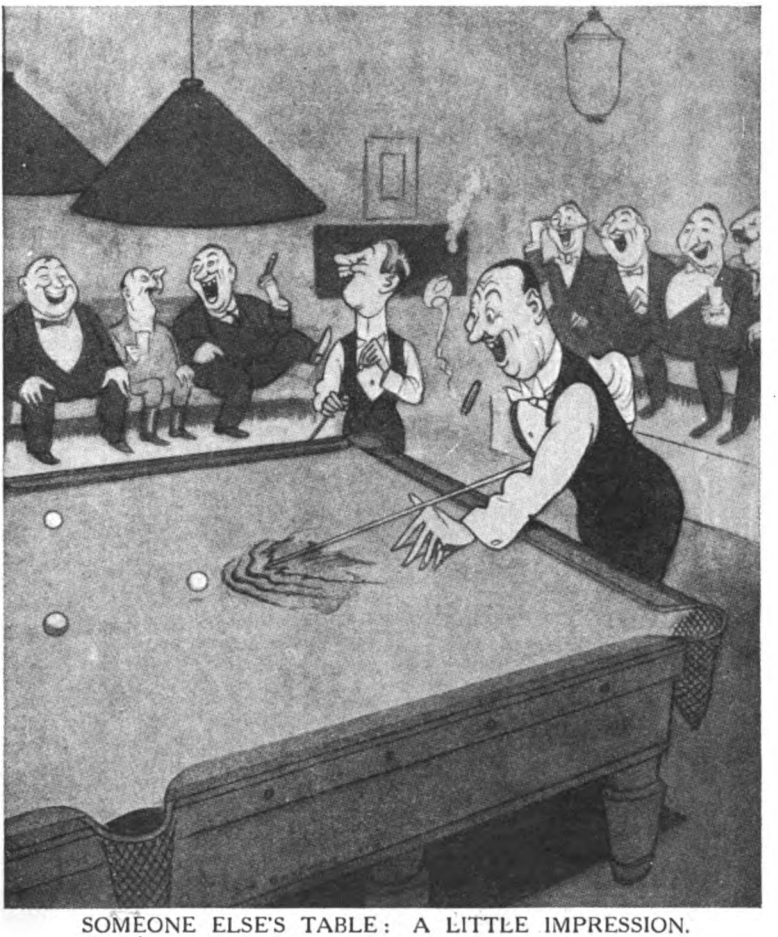
## THE FAMOUS ARTIST

I AM a humorist. It is frightful. You have no idea of the true state of things as they affect me. I am the man who makes fun of all the tragedies of humanity, for your diversion. I make sport of the long noses, the fat men and women, accidents, mud splashing into the eye, seasickness, failure, illness, everything—and all for you. But I do not laugh at these things myself, for I see them as they really are, I know that they are dreadful. At times I have been called cruel, but that is really far from being the case. It is you who are cruel, for it is you who laugh, but since you are in the midst of them, helping to cause them, you are too busy to keep a record of events—so it is I who devote my time and energies to acting as your mouthpiece and reporter in this respect.

Take the well-known example of the unfortunate person who slips upon a banana skin. In this case you are one of the three necessary component parts of the drama. You are either A.—the man who eats the banana and throws the unwanted skin upon the ground, or B.—the man who steps upon it and cracks his skull upon the pavement, or C.—one of those in the vicinity of the accident who rush forward to render assistance. If you are A. you cannot possibly laugh at the time, for you dropped the skin in, say, Chelsea, and are in Oxford Street before B. has reached Chelsea. It is inconceivable that B. would act immediately A. drops the skin. If that remotest of all possibilities should occur, you most surely would not laugh, for you would be arrested, or chased to exhaustion. If you are B. there is no need to argue whether you would laugh. If you are C. you would be too occupied in crying "Give him air!" "Undo his collar!" "Are you hurt, sir?" and struggling to maintain your own foothold, and place, in the sympathetic throng.




The well-known example of the unfortunate person who slips upon a banana skin.



SOMEONE ELSE'S TABLE: A LITTLE IMPRESSION.

**The amusing skit referred to by Mr. Bateman on this page.**

And what part do I play in all this? I am the grey lurking shadow in the background, taking rapid mental notes of the skin, the way B. has slipped on it, and how the C.'s are doing their best for him.

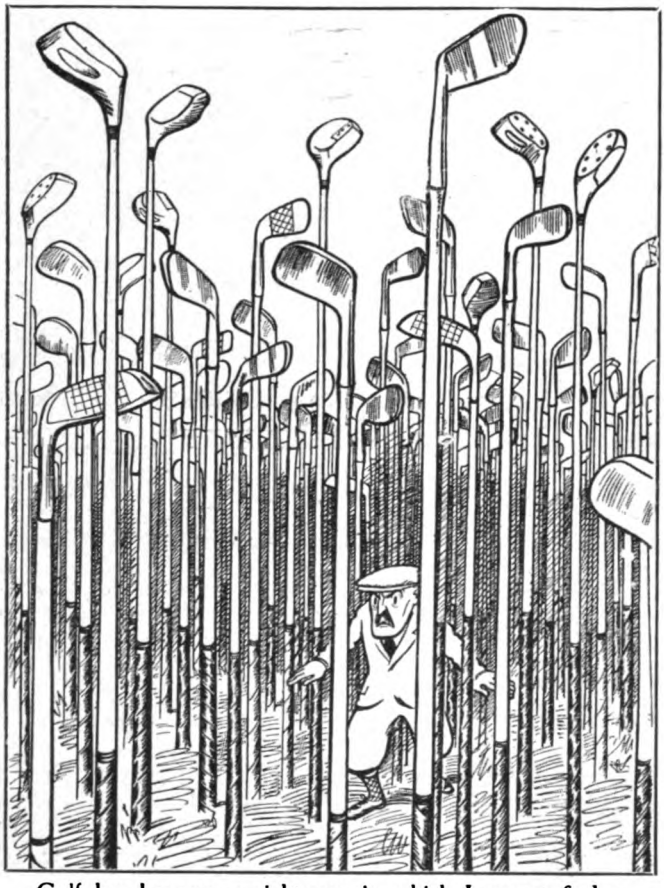
"But," you may argue, "what is there to prevent you, the humorist, from being either A., B., or C.?" Impossible! For one thing, I do not eat bananas. My weak digestion cannot assimilate so strong a fruit; and, besides, I was too well brought up to think of eating in the streets. And B.? Equally unthinkable. I have to look always where I am going and pick my steps—my very existence depends upon it. Many a banana skin have I cheated. If I had not, just think of the headlines in the Press. "Famous Humorist Slips on Banana Skin. No Laughing Matter." "Discarded Skin Makes Star See Stars." And such-like. The shouts of laughter would be greater then than they had ever been for my own masterpieces of fun. The shame of it would be the finish of me.

What, then, of C.? Again impossible, for here we come up against one of the essentials in my method of earning a living. I should be so entranced in watching the whole action of the event from start to finish that it would never occur to me to rush forward to assist. Besides, my common sense would restrain me from adding another member to a crowd of helpers, already over big for the job.

There you have the whole thing in a nutshell. Do you see the pass I have come to? Making sport of all the little weaknesses and eccentricities of my fellow-creatures and the situations they become involved in, my own conduct must be so immaculate as to be almost negligible.

Years ago I enjoyed a game of billiards, and one day in a moment of excitement I produced a most amusing skit on the subject of a player cutting the cloth. It caused roars of laughter, but from then onwards my own pleasure in the game began to wane, until by now it has died right away. I am now almost too nervous to hold a cue, let alone play properly with it. I have done many another screaming lampoon of the billiard player, introducing all his little tricks of style and shortcomings. I have shown you how funny he really looks when he is trying to make the balls behave as he wants them to. And as a result, when I go to the table I am in an agony of fear as to what I may be about to do and how I look when I am doing it. Suppose *I* cut the cloth!

It is the same with golf. It has ceased



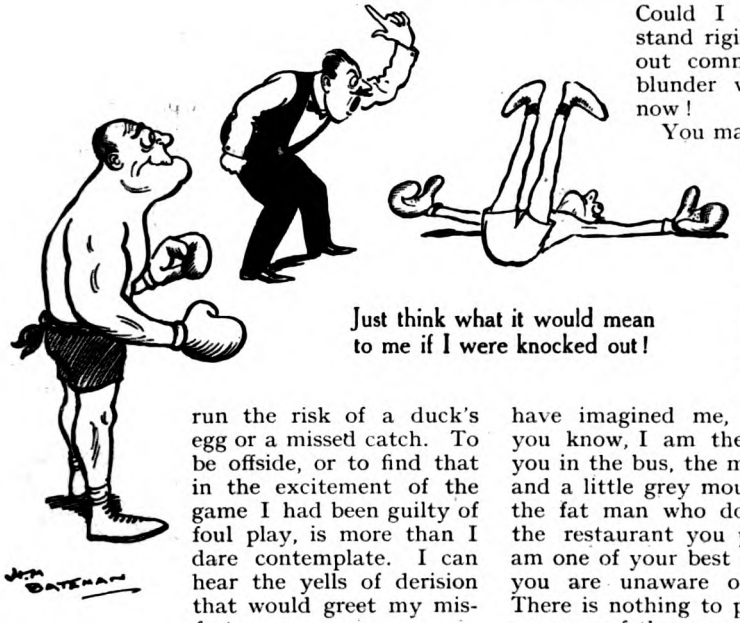
Golf has become a nightmare in which I cannot find a club to suit me.

to be a game with me and has become a kind of penance. Remembering always my renderings of the various aspects and incidents of this fascinating pastime, I dare not allow any hint of what is really passing in my mind to show itself. There is no seeking relief in an exclamation for me. I take the first club that is offered to me, even though I know it is unsuitable. I am overconcerned with the replacing of the smallest of divots, I must not hustle the players in front, nor dare I keep waiting those behind. I have never yet entirely missed the ball, but the possibility of doing so is an everlasting nightmare. How the caddies and the entire club would laugh then! I should have to resign. And then they would laugh still more.

Boxing? In my youth I revelled in it and all such manly sports. But not now. Too many times I have joked at the expense of its exponents. Just think what it would mean to me if I were knocked out! Or disqualified!

So it is with cricket and football. No longer dare I

I should have to resign. And then they would laugh still more.



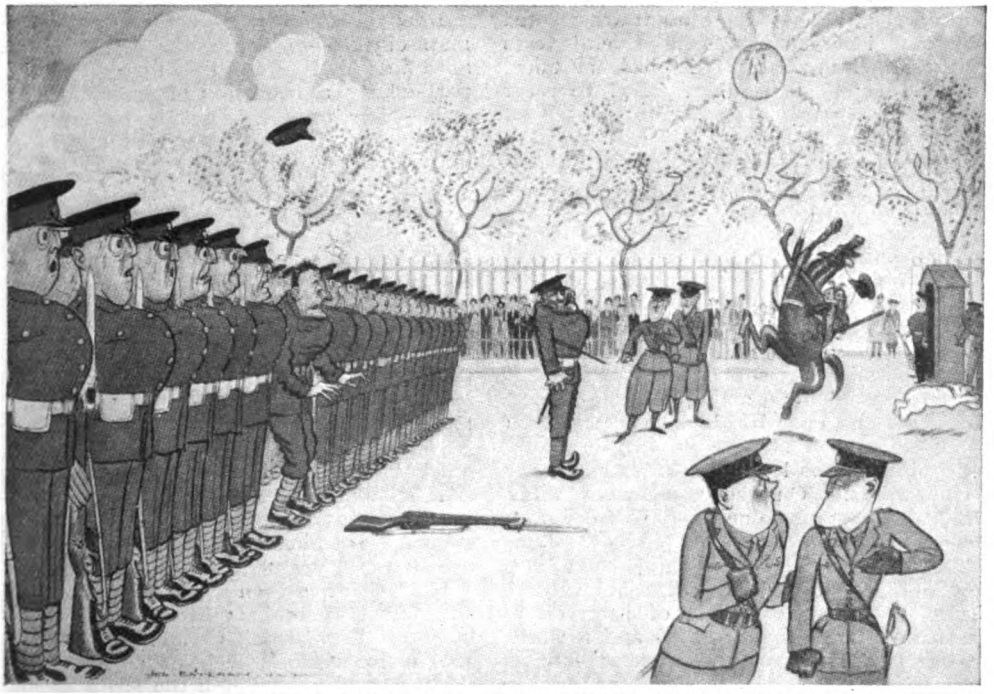

Just think what it would mean to me if I were knocked out!

run the risk of a duck's egg or a missed catch. To be offside, or to find that in the excitement of the game I had been guilty of foul play, is more than I dare contemplate. I can hear the yells of derision that would greet my misfortune.

The Navy and the Army also have not escaped my attentions—the very Services which protect me and secure my welfare. Could I dance a hornpipe or stand rigidly to attention without committing some grievous blunder with my rifle? Not now!

You may have wondered what sort of man I am to look at. Doubtless you have pictured me in your mind's eye as a great round laughing fellow—it is only natural. But I am not going to give myself away here if I can help it. I will only say that, however you have imagined me, I am not. For all you know, I am the man sitting next to you in the bus, the man with the spectacles and a little grey moustache. Or I may be the fat man who does himself so well at the restaurant you patronize. Perhaps I am one of your best clients in business and you are unaware of my double nature. There is nothing to prevent me from being any one of the many people you see about at any time of the day or night.

But I go softly. I have to, for I am not like you. I am a funny man.



THE GUARDSMAN WHO DROPPED IT! A TRAGEDY AT WELLINGTON BARRACKS.

"The Army also has not escaped my attentions," says Mr. Bateman.

# The ROOM

By

## STACY AUMONIER

*ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL R.I.*

THE Room was in Praxton Street, which is not very far from the Euston Road. It was fifteen feet by ten feet six inches. It had a door and a window. The window was covered by stiff lace curtains with several tears in them, framed by red plush curtains, which, if pulled together, failed to meet by nearly a yard. The furniture consisted of a circular mahogany table, a Victorian sideboard with mirrors inset in the panels above, a narrow-seated horsehair chair which had a tendency to shoot the occupant into the fireplace, two other mahogany chairs with green velvet seats, a white enamelled flower-stand supporting a puce-coloured earthenware pot, in which a dismal aspidistra struggled for existence. In the angle between the door and the window was an iron frame supporting what proved to be a bed by night and a dumping-ground for odds and ends by day. The wall was papered with a strange pattern of violet and pink flowers leaping in irregular waves ceilingwards. On the walls were many framed oleographs, one of the Crucifixion, one of a small boy holding a piece of sultana cake on a plate, and a large collie dog regarding the cake with melancholy greed. There was a photograph of somebody's husband with a square beard and a white stock, two water-colours of some foreign country characterized by blue mountains reflected in a lake, and a large print of the coronation of King George. On the floor was a yellow and red carpet of indeterminate pattern, worn right through in all the most frequented spots of the room. Around the gas chandelier a dozen or so flies played their eternal game of touch.

Now this is a brief description of inanimate objects—except for the flies. But we all know that even inanimate objects—particularly a collection of inanimate objects—have a soul. That is to say that they subtly affect everyone on the spiritual plane. Perhaps it would be safer to say that they have a message.

To James Wilbraham Waite, seated on the horsehair chair on a bright July afternoon, they brought an abrupt message. He looked around the Room and he said to himself out loud :—

"This is simply hell!"

He had occupied this Room in the lodging-house for seven years, and it had taken all this time to breed in him the special kind of intense loathing and hate which he felt at that moment. It was not the quick hate of sudden anger. It was the slow combustible passion of years of disappointment and dissatisfaction. The Room seemed to embody in itself all that he detested and yearned to avoid.

His father had been a small Essex farmer, and James Wilbraham had spent his boyhood on the farm. Owing, however, to Mr. Waite senior's lack of concentration on the commercial side of the farm, and his too great concentration on the good stuff served over the bar of "The Dog and Destiny," he went bankrupt and died soon

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atter. His wife had died many years before, and James Wilbraham, being an only son, found himself at the age of eighteen alone in the world without even a mangel-wurzel to his name. He was a dreamy boy, loving an open-air life. He had done fairly well at the Grammar School. He had no head for mathematics, but excelled at theoretical subjects which brought him no credit or marks. When his father died there was apparently nothing for him to do but become a farm hand. One of the masters at the school who had taken an interest in him did his best to dissuade him from this course. His name was Mr. Flint, and he pointed out the hopeless future of manual labour without capital. He emphasized the fact that James had had quite a good education and that he was intelligent, and that he had only to use his brains to make his way in the world. For two years James fought against the good advice of his friend. He worked for a local farmer, and he might be working for the same farmer now but for the fact that he fell in love with a girl he had seen walking about the streets of Pondersham. He never spoke to her, but she stirred some profound note in his nature. It was less the girl herself, perhaps, than the theory of love in the abstract. She was what was known as a lady, inaccessible, remote, fragile as a china vase. He began to regard his rough hands and coarse clothes with misgiving. And then one day he went to the pictures with an acquaintance and found himself suddenly projected into a world of magnificent Life, spelt with a very large L, where gorgeous women flashed in and out of priceless automobiles, and powdered flunkeys ushered them into marvellous palaces. The contrast was too violent. If ever he wanted to possess one of these splendid creatures—well, he could never do so as a farm hand.

His ideas of farming had never been academic, to put it mildly. He had inherited a great deal of his father's vagueness. During his father's lifetime he had regarded the soil as a mysterious substitute for a mother. It succoured him with the good things he liked, and made few calls on his industry. He liked to ride over it, and see the little green shoots budding. Then he would dream by a pond, or idle the hours away with a dog and a ferret.

Consequently when he informed his employer one day, with a sigh, that he had decided to give up farming, that gentleman accepted his resignation with unblushing satisfaction. Through the influence of Mr. Flint he got a situation as a clerk in a corn-chandler's at Pondersham. He earned seventeen-and-sixpence a week, and managed to keep himself—in a state of chronic hunger.



HE endured this life for over a year, when, again through the influence of Mr. Flint, he considerably improved his position. For he obtained a situation at a scholastic employment agency in London at a salary of thirty shillings a week. It was then that he made his first introduction to the Room. He paid twelve shillings and sixpence a week for it, and that included a breakfast consisting of tea and a boiled egg. To record his career during the seven years that led up to this particular July afternoon would be tedious in the extreme. It seemed to centre entirely around the Room. By half-crowns and five shillings his salary had now risen to three pounds five shillings. During the next seven years by similar processes it might conceivably rise to five pounds. He would then be thirty-five. But it was not these material considerations and prospects alone which disturbed him. It was that eternal sense of ingrained discontent.

He detested his work. At his desk he was always dreaming. He dreamt of far-off countries, and beauty, and love, and romance. He joined a local library and spent most of his evenings alone reading. And when he had been completely transported into another world, he would look up and find himself in the Room. He would catch his own reflection in the crazy mirrors, the boy and sultana cake and the collie dog would appear to be grinning at him insipidly from the wall, the vision of King George in his coronation robes only produced in him a sense of acrid disloyalty. The wall-paper leaping towards the ceiling made him want to scream. Even when he turned out the gas and went to bed he was intensely conscious of enveloping ugliness.

On this particular afternoon his eyes focused on the flies round the chandelier. He had come home early—as it was a slack time at the office—and he was reading a novel with a setting in the desert. He became absorbed with visions. He saw the sleepy pile of grey and white buildings against the vivid green of date palms in an oasis. He could hear the distant sounds of strange music, and breathe the rich perfumes of the African night. Then suddenly he looked up and saw those London flies playing their ridiculous game beneath the chandelier. He felt maddened. He put down the book and made a swipe at them with his handkerchief. They dispersed, only to reform a few seconds later. He hit at them again and again without any tangible result. Then he sat down and thought.

"I want a holiday," he said to himself. "My nerves are in a rotten state." Owing to the exigencies of office work he had had his fortnight's holiday in April. He would

not get another until—some time next year. And then he would probably go to—Hastings, or Bognor, or worse. It was awful, unendurable.

" I won't have you here," he suddenly said to the flies. There was a look of grim determination on his face. He picked up a towel and slightly damped it, and began a fresh campaign. He soon realized that to hit them in the air was a chance in a hundred. You have to wait till they settle. He tracked them about the Room. He killed several on the table, quite a lot on the wall and the window, but nothing seemed to make any difference to the party under the chandelier. He made wild swipes at them and actually hit several on the wing, but back they came. This persistence was either astonishing pluck or astonishing stupidity. It was almost uncanny. He struck wildly at one on the chandelier itself and then—crash !—down came the globe and smashed on the floor. A few minutes later he heard the ponderous steps of his rheumaticky landlady coming up the stairs. He gripped the towel hard. He felt uncertain of himself. " If the old fool makes a fuss about that globe, I'll give her a swipe," his mind registered. There was the familiar tap on the door and it opened.

To his surprise she held out a letter. She had not apparently heard the globe smash, neither did she notice it.

" Mrs. Bean's just left this," she said. " It came this morning, but it was addressed to seventy-five."

He took the letter and said " Thanks ! " then, feeling that his passions were somewhat vented, he pointed to the globe and said, casually :—

" I'm afraid I broke the globe hitting at a fly ! "

She said : " Oh, dear ! H'm ! I'll go and get a dustpan and brush. My legs are that bad."

" I'll get it for you if you like," he answered, feeling suddenly quite amiable.

" I wish you would, Mr. Waite ; it's under the kitchen dresser."

The business of getting the dustpan and brush, clearing up the broken glass, and listening to a story about the shocking pain Mr. Bean was suffering with his kidney trouble occupied ten minutes. She went at last, and he opened the letter. It was from a firm of lawyers in Liverpool informing him that an uncle of his had recently died in Canada, and under the terms of the will he was the inheritor of approximately six hundred pounds.

Six hundred pounds ! For the first time he stared at the Room with unseeing eyes. It had no horrors for him. He saw right through the mahogany sideboard and the leaping wall-paper out into the great broad spaces of the world. Gulls screamed above the heaving decks of a mighty ship. He saw white cities with minarets and mosques glittering in the sun. There were valleys aglow with myriad flowers. A woman coming towards him——

The desire to talk to someone about his amazing news was irresistible. He knew no one in the house except the landlady. He went downstairs and found her ironing some flannel underclothing in the kitchen. He said :—

" I say, Mrs. Beldam, I've come in for some money."

The landlady looked up at him with an expression of greedy interest. She said :—

" Oh, that's nice, I must say. How much is it ? "

" About six hundred pounds."

She looked down at her flannel petticoat. She was cautiously balancing the potentialities of the situation. She couldn't exactly see how she was to come in over this. All it would amount to would be that she would probably lose a lodger. She repeated :—

" That's nice." Then after blowing on her iron, she added :—

" You take my advice, young man, and put it all in War Savings Certificates."

" War Savings Certificates ! "

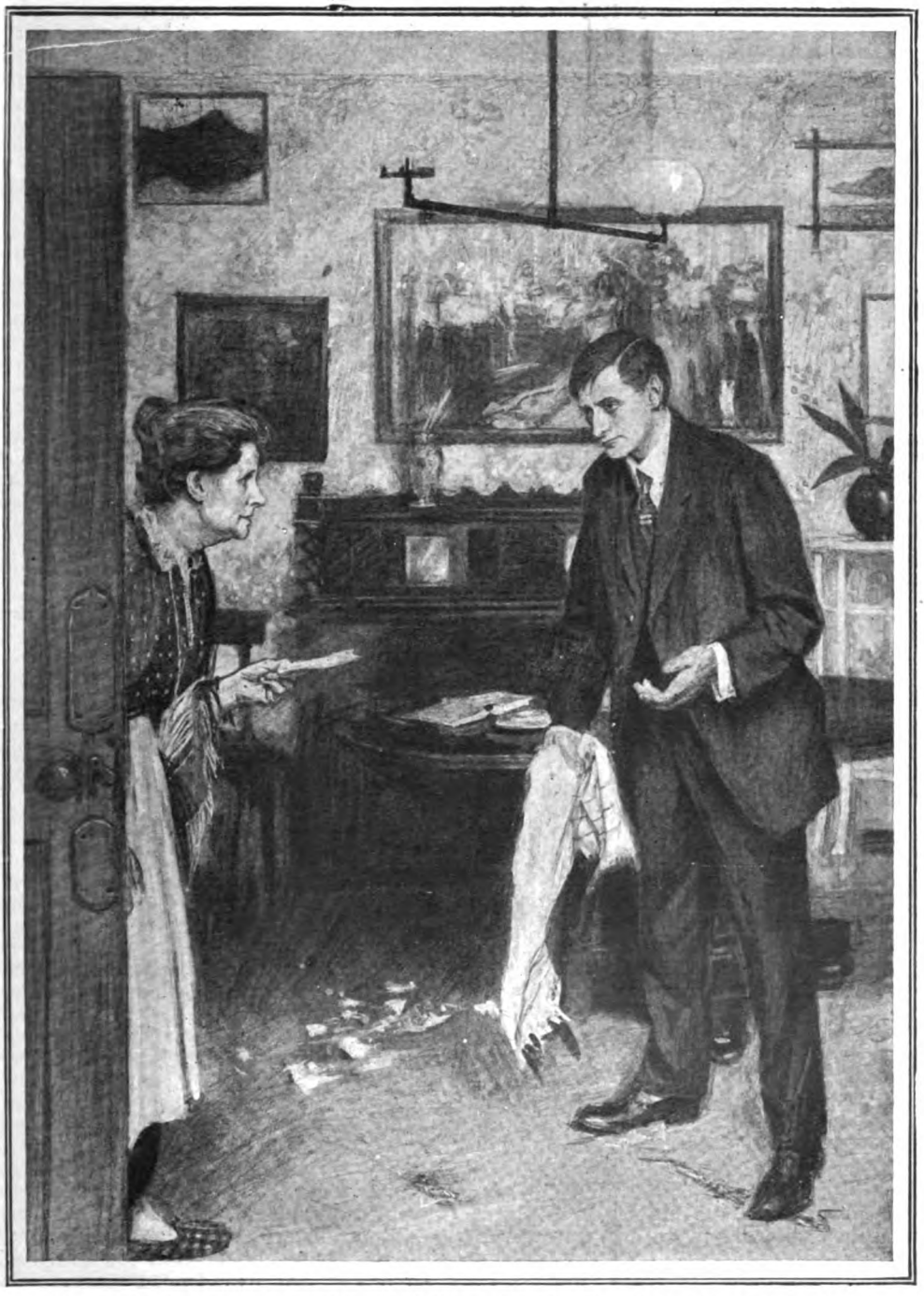
He looked at her with horror. Ah ! he could see through it all. This social conspiracy to keep him in the Room. Here was the golden key to freedom, and this woman, this state, social life itself talked to him about War Savings Certificates ! Not likely ! He barked at her :—

" We shall see," and almost ran out of the room.

IT was nearly a month before he got his cheque. In the meantime he had been carefully maturing his plans. He bought maps and guides and works of reference. He gave the scholastic agency a week's notice, and when he was free he devoted his time to reading and polishing up his French, at which he had been fairly proficient at school.

The Room, if anything, seemed more hideous than before. He felt himself already superior to it, nevertheless he was still a little frightened. It had for so long dominated him with its drab menace, he could not believe that he would ever really escape from its clutches. He dreamed of some feral vengeance. Perhaps on the last night he would get busy with an axe or a poker. But no, this would be very foolish. He would be made to pay and so the Room would score off him !

And so one day in early September he



He took the letter and said "Thanks!" Then he pointed to the broken globe and said, casually: "I'm afraid I broke the globe hitting at a fly!"

gave up the key of the Room to the landlady and left it for ever.

He had about fifty pounds in cash on him. With the rest of the money he had bought a World-wide Letter of Credit. What destiny had in store for him when the money was spent he neither knew nor cared. He was achieving his supreme ambition—to escape.

Four days later he arrived at Algiers, tired, bewildered, but very excited. He regarded Algiers as a good kicking-off place for his adventures. He wanted to get to the desert, but, knowing nothing of the country, he didn't know how to proceed. He stayed there for a week in a quiet hotel, wandering about, and getting lost in the maze of the Arab quarter. The city repelled him a little, with its large hotels and terraces of French villas. Even the Arab quarter had a sense of unreality. He felt every moment that he might step out and find himself in the Earl's Court Road. One day at lunch he got into conversation with a Frenchman who told him about a journey he was about to take to Laghouat, in the South. James Wilbraham pricked up his ears. The Frenchman, it appeared, was a traveller in rugs and bric-à-brac. He was making the journey with a companion and they were going by car. Yes, there were only the three of them including the chauffeur, and if James cared to join them and pay his share—the contract was concluded then and there.

THREE days later the party left. They motored the whole of the first day through the richly fertile country of Northern Algeria, and spent the night at Boghari, up in the hills. The two Frenchmen talked the whole time, and James gathered about one-third of their conversation, which was mostly about women, the rate of exchange, French politics, and trade. At Boghari it was very cold and overcast.

The seeker after romance began to feel depressed that night. It was all very beautiful, of course, but somehow things were not for the moment shaping in the way he had hoped. A motor-car was an unromantic way of travelling, and French commercial travellers can be very boring. He felt a tripper, an alien. He wondered whether he would ever fit into any *milieu* in which he found himself. In the early morning he dreamt he was back in the Room, and the chairs and tables and lace curtains were laughing at him.

The next day, however, the car wound its way down into the plain below and they began to approach the desert. By midday it was very hot. They lunched at Djelfa on fish soup, bustard stewed in oil, and Algerian wine. The food nauseated James, but the Frenchmen became more and more garrulous. He wanted to get on to where romance would begin. At last they started and all the afternoon the car raced on down a straight road through endless tracts of sand dotted with scrub, clumps of coarse grass, and occasionally pistacia trees. It was nearly sundown before they reached the oasis of Laghouat. They drove up to the little hotel just outside the wall of the town.

Having washed and changed his clothes, James felt a great desire to escape from the two Frenchmen. He put on his hat and hurried out. Immediately outside the hotel he was surrounded by swarms of Arab boys jabbering in French. He tried to shoo them off, but four of them followed him everywhere he went. He learnt afterwards to become accustomed to this attention, but at the moment it annoyed him. He wanted to be alone. He crossed the road and climbed up a rocky eminence, followed by his retinue. Clambering over the last boulder he gave a gasp of astonishment. Laghouat is two thousand feet above sea level, and from it the desert slopes gradually down. At first glance it gave him the impression of the sea, an endless quivering ocean glistening in the sun. In the foreground were thousands of stately date palms, while on his right the little town, dominated by its minaret, was a pleasant jumble of salmon pink, grey, white, and brown. For the first time since he left the Room, he thrilled with a sense of satiety. He sat there for a long while dreaming. The boys chattered to him and among themselves, but he was hardly conscious of them. The sun tipped the horizon and suddenly he heard a gun fired, a flag fluttered from the top of the minaret, and a diminutive figure in black appeared. Against the clear blue sky graduated to pale orange on the horizon the minaret stood out like a pillar of gold. A rich bell-like voice rang out and seemed to reach the furthermost places in the desert. It was the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer.

James Wilbraham gave a sigh of content.

"I have found it," he thought to himself.

That night he slept badly. He was troubled by the problem of how to keep what he had found. How could he fit into this atmosphere? How could he live? He was at present a foreign guest staying at the only hotel. The town was entirely Arab, its activities almost entirely devoted to the breeding of sheep and cattle. For days he wandered about, listening for

signs and portents. The French travellers returned to Algiers. A few other trippers came and went. A week went by. And then one day he met his fate in the person of Giles Duxberry. He was seated on the veranda of the hotel one evening when a tall angular figure, in a white burnous, came slouching up the path. He seemed to know his way about the hotel, for he made straight for the bell, rang it, and ordered an anisette. Then he retired, washed himself, came back, and sat at a table next to James. He poured water into the colourless liquid, drank it in two gulps, and ordered another. When he had consumed four of these insidious drinks, he suddenly said :—

" English, aren't you ? "

" Yes," said James, with surprise.

" Have a drink ? "

It would have been inhuman to refuse, and James also had an anisette. He had never drunk it before, and his single one had a much more potent effect on him than the four did on his chance acquaintance. He tried to be conversational, but it was very difficult. Mr. Duxberry's skin was almost the colour of an Arab's, but his eyes were tired, his manners lethargic. He was like a man utterly bored with every human experience—except perhaps drink. He barked in monosyllables, and explained things in little disconnected sentences.

HE was, it appeared, employed by a Lancashire firm in the halfa business. It seemed that some genius had discovered that the long coarse halfa grass which grew in the desert was excellent material for making paper. It was garnered by the natives, and deposited in bundles in various depots about the country. Giles Duxberry was in charge of a depot in a tiny oasis fifteen miles away. He lived there by himself, and the only thing he could find in the job's favour was that once a week he could come into Laghouat and get drunk. He proceeded to get drunk on this occasion, and before the evening was far advanced he was quite incoherent.

Before he had reached this stage, however, he had asked James to come out and see him, and explained where it was. The only way of getting there was on horseback. James felt grateful for his early years spent on a farm. He could ride. The expedition, moreover, carried with it an element of adventure. Perhaps he, too, could get a similar situation to that of Giles Duxberry.

It took him three days to obtain the loan of a horse, which he eventually did through the intermediary of four people. He felt singularly like a paladin setting out on some holy quest as he left the town behind and cantered across the desert. He had no difficulty in finding his destination. It was a small oasis with the inevitable date palms, barley, and castor-oil plants, a low, rambling, lime-washed building made of mud and cement, and some half-dozen Nomad tents pitched in the sand. He found Duxberry just sitting down to lunch. Without any particular show of warmth the latter said :—

" Hullo ! you've come, then ! "

He shouted something in Arabic into the room beyond. The room was plainly but comfortably furnished, and very clean. They had lunch and were waited on by an incredibly ugly old Ouled Nail woman, with the tattoo mark on her forehead and henna stains on her finger-tips. The food was excellently cooked. James talked and asked questions, and received monosyllabic grunts in reply. Afterwards they sat outside in the sun and smoked. During the afternoon Arabs kept on arriving with donkeys laden with bundles of halfa grass. Duxberry checked their operations with idle indifference. There was an amazing sense of peace and space. In an idle moment James thought of the awful Room. What a contrast ! He felt envious of this hard-bitten sunburnt manager. Before he left he put out a feeler. He asked his host whether he knew if there were any more jobs like that going.

Duxberry stared at him.

" What for ? " he asked.

" Me."

" You ! "

He seemed unable to understand.

" But you've got your fare back to England, haven't you ? "

" Yes, but I'd rather live here."

" Rather live out in this God-forsaken place than in England ! "

" Much."

" What is there to it ? "

" I don't know. It's just the sense of —oh, freedom and space, and sun and air."

The older man regarded him gravely.

" Listen, son," he said ; " when you've had as much of it as I have you'll cut all that stuff out. I ran away from home when I was a boy and worked my passage to South Africa. For thirty years I've beach-combed all over the earth. I've only one ambition."

" What's that ? "

" To get back home."

" Good God ! "

They looked at each other uncomprehendingly, like men who have reached a mental impasse.

James Wilbraham left soon after and returned to Laghouat. For days he wandered

around the desert or sat in the hotel, pondering over the problem of his own life. Certain realizations became clear to him. He was unhappy. He wanted to stay out there. Giles Duxberry was unhappy. He wanted to go back to England. Well, surely the situation could be adjusted! Let Giles go back to the Room, and see how he liked it. Let James take his place.

A few days later Giles arrived for his weekly "drunk." James waited until he had had his fifth anisette, then he said :—

"I say, Duxberry, I'd like to make a proposition to you."

"Carry on, son."

"Could you manage to wangle it so that I could take on your job? If you could I would be pleased to give you a hundred pounds to pay your fare back to England."

The beachcomber's eyes distended. He took a deep draught of the milk-coloured liquid.

"A hundred pounds!" he exclaimed. His eyes said :—

"Well, of all the blanketty, blanketty—idiots!"

They discussed ways and means. Two days later James again rode out to see his friend. Yes, it was decided that it might be wangled. Correspondence passed, resulting in James having to make a trip to Algiers to interview a gentleman who was born in Blackburn. The arrangement was satisfactorily made. He returned to Laghouat full of the joy of life. He spent a week with Giles Duxberry, learning the small technicalities of his undertaking. He began to pick up Arabic words and expressions. And then one day he handed over a hundred good English pounds, and Duxberry counted the notes carefully, pouched them, and held out his hand.

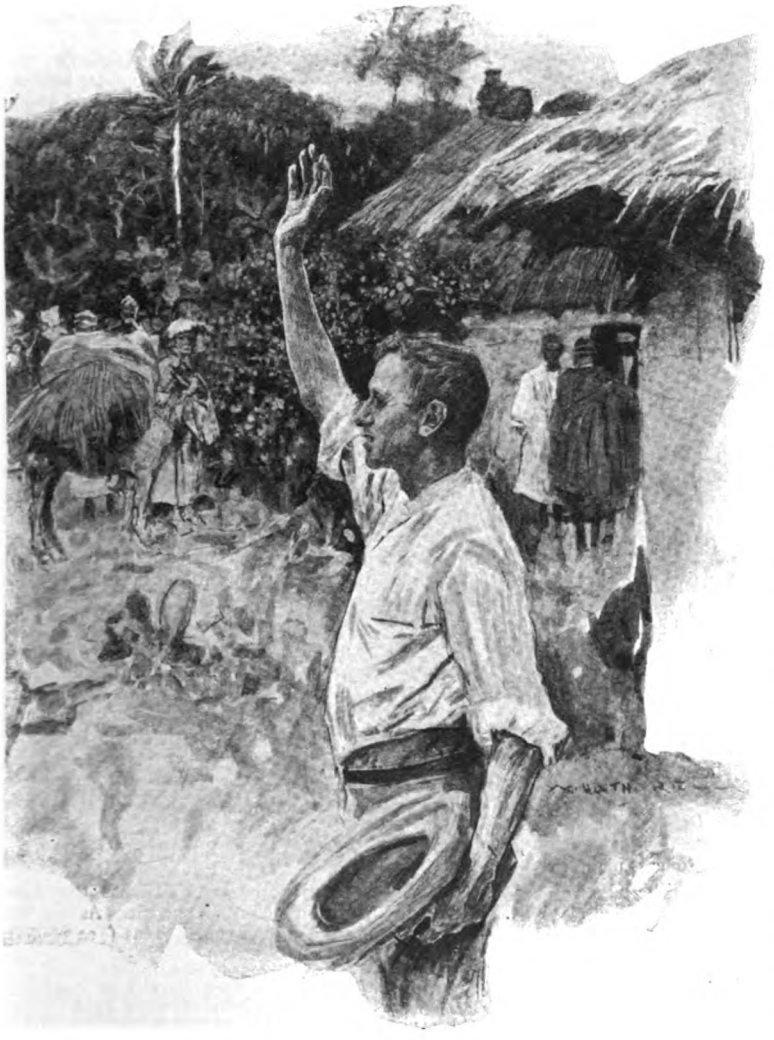
Duxberry mounted his horse, waved a perfunctory farewell, and rode away.

"Good luck to you!" he said.

James felt strangely moved. He could hardly speak. It was not that he had developed any particular affection for his new friend, but that he felt him to be a poignant figure in his destiny. He said :—

"Good luck to *you!*"

Nothing more was said. Duxberry mounted his horse, waved a perfunctory farewell, and rode away. James stood there bareheaded, breathing in the warm air, and



absorbing the marvellous sense of repose of the desert.

AND so one day Giles Duxberry found himself seated in a horse-hair chair that had a tendency to shoot the occupant into the fireplace. He had removed his boots, and was gazing into the fire. Then he looked round and regarded the Room. There was a lovely curly sideboard with mirrors which reflected the vision of his sunburnt face, a white stand with a pot and a plant, a circular table, two other chairs, a bed. On the wall a pretty pattern, and some enchanting pictures, a sacred subject, a boy and a collie dog and a piece of cake, some clever water-colour paintings, King George in his magnificent coronation robes. Civilization!

It was a dream come true—a dream of thirty years. He sighed with happy contentment. He had eighty pounds in cash on him. He had only to stroll out and there were a dozen saloons within a mile where he could order any drink he liked. There were cinemas and music-halls. There was life passing all the time, strange and amazing things that might happen any moment. He might get a good job, make money, marry some beautiful woman. He gazed fascinated by the Room and murmured:—

"Gosh! This is Heaven!"

As a man accustomed to live in lonely places he had acquired a habit of talking to himself. He addressed the fire:—

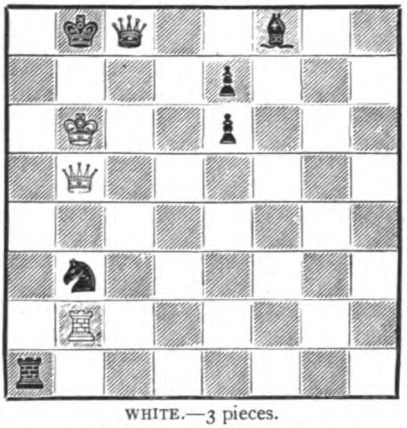
"Jiminy! what a fool! what a lunatic! That guy will soon get fed up with it. He'll come bundling back. Anyway, he's not going to take my Room from me. It was a square deal."

# PERPLEXITIES.

## By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

### 786.—THE TREADMILL.

BLACK—7 pieces.



WHITE.—3 pieces.

White to play and win.

HERE is an amusing fantasy by Mr. Reichhelm, the American problem expert. It is not difficult, as White must check on every move or be himself mated by Black. But the play will be found to be quite funny, and the title itself gives a sort of clue to the solution.

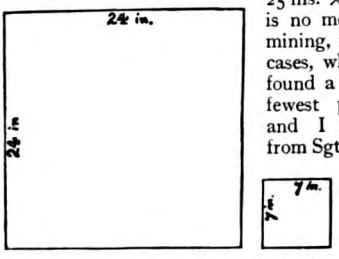
### 787.—LIFE'S REQUIREMENTS.

A CORRESPONDENT (W. J. B.) sends this Missing Word puzzle. Every missing word contains the same five letters.

You must have * * * * * to guide your steed ;
You must have * * * * * for your bow ;
To * * * * * your hands a bowl you need ;
In fog a * * * * * ships must blow ;
And when you've * * * * * after waking,
Your linen is of * * * * * making.

### 788.—THE SQUARES OF VENEER.

IN our solution to this puzzle (No. 710—August, 1924) we showed how these two squares might be cut into five pieces so as to fit together and form a square 25 ins. × 25 ins. There is no method of determining, in some of these cases, whether we have found a solution in the fewest possible pieces, and I have received from Sgt. E. T. Richards a solution to this puzzle in four pieces. In fact, the smaller square need not be cut at all, and the larger one may be dissected in three pieces by cuts all parallel to the sides of the square. I am sure many of my readers will like to seek the answer under these conditions.




### 789.—CORRECTING A TABLE.

HERE is an easy little exercise for the novice. There is a table of Prime numbers up to 10,000 in Ozanam's "Mathematical Recreations," 1803. I have found the following errors in it. (I.) In the following series, 503, 509, 521, 533, 541, 547, 557, 563, 569, one of the numbers is *not* a prime. Which one is it, and what are the factors ?

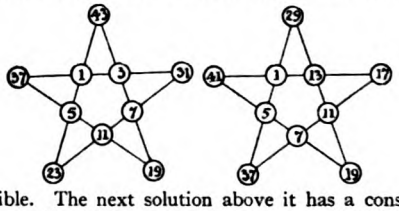
(II.) At another place we have the series, 751, 757, 761, 769, 773, 787, 797, 811, 821. Somewhere between the first number and the last in this series, and also in the previous series, a prime number is omitted. What are the two numbers ?

The hunt should be quite a pleasant little exercise and not difficult for the young arithmetician.

## Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

### 782.—A PRIME STAR.

I SHOW two solutions to this puzzle ; in each case the constant addition is 72. One would expect to find a lower solution, but I am convinced that it is not




possible. The next solution above it has a constant of 84, and I think every such constant must be divisible by 4.

### 783.—THE FAMILY AGES.

THE father and mother were both of the same age, 36 years, and the three children were triplets of 6 years of age. Thus the sum of all their ages is 90 years and all the other conditions are correctly fulfilled.

### 784.—A TINY CROSS-WORD PUZZLE.

THE solution is as follows :—

T I P
T I P
T I P

It will be seen that the word TIP has the three meanings, A gift, a point, and a tilt. As for the verticals, the words are, of course, Teas (Tea plants), Eyes, and Peas.

### 785.—THE SHORTENED WORD CHAIN.

I HAVE not been able to do better than the following, in which I have shortened by one letter a solution sent to me by E. H. B. It will be seen that only twenty letters are used in addition to the alphabet in Capitals.

QuaGiPIFeZinCuBaRaJeTolLAMYaKiDOHEmUS-laVaNoWaX.

### 780.—ODDS AND EVENS.

SEVERAL correspondents have shown that there are six solutions in all. The following four may be added to those given in our issue for December last :—

245) 999916785 (4081293
245) 997466785 (4071293
248) 764160912 (3081294
248) 761680912 (3071294

# THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

## Contents for March, 1926.

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Frontispiece: "The barman *put* me outside—me being too ill to stop 'im—and an old gentleman wot was passing took me into a chemist's shop and stood treat."


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| BED CASES ... Illustrations by Will Owen. | W. W. JACOBS | 211 |
| THE PURSE ... Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd. | J. J. BELL | 218 |
| THE ROSE CAVALIERS ... Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I. | G. R. MALLOCH | 227 |
| WHEN I WAS YOUNG—XI. ... Illustrations by H. M. Brock, and from Photographs. | CAPTAIN E. R. G. R. EVANS, C.B., D.S.O., R.N. | 234 |
| DEATH, FIRE, AND LIFE ... Illustrations by C. E. Brock, R.I. | ARNOLD BENNETT | 241 |
| THE ENGLISH FILTER ... Illustrations by John Campbell. | C. E. BECHHOFER ROBERTS | 251 |
| HOW IT FEELS TO BE BLIND ... Illustrations by Tom Peddie, and from Photographs. | J. MACRAE | 261 |
| KEEPING IN WITH VOSPER ... Illustrations by Charles Crombie. | P. G. WODEHOUSE | 267 |
| ROMANTIC REGIMENTAL MARCHES ... Illustrations by W. B. Wollen, R.I. | WALTER WOOD | 278 |
| THE LAND OF MIST; or, The Quest of Edward Malone ... Part IX. Illustrations by F. E. Hiley. | A. CONAN DOYLE | 285 |
| "THE ETERNAL FEMININE" IN HUMOUR ... Illustrations from Drawings. | | 295 |
| FUNERAL MARCH ... Illustrations by F. Matania, R.I. | STACY AUMONIER | 299 |
| TALENT AND GENIUS ... Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik. | BARRY PAIN | 307 |
| ACROSTICS ... | | 311 |
| PERPLEXITIES ... | HENRY E. DUDENEY | 312 |


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*To face back of Frontispiece.*

# The STRAND MAGAZINE

MARCH, 1926.

*Next Month:*

*FIRST INSTALMENT OF*

**"Days of My Life"**

An Autobiography

*BY*

**H. RIDER HAGGARD**

"THE BARMAN *PUT* ME OUTSIDE—ME BEING TOO ILL TO STOP 'IM—AND AN OLD GENTLEMAN WOT WAS PASSING TOOK ME INTO A CHEMIST'S SHOP AND STOOD TREAT."

*(See page 211.)*

# Bed Cases

By

# W. W. JACOBS

ILLUSTRATED BY
WILL OWEN

THE night-watchman was ill at ease, and, all ordinary positions failing to give relief, adopted several entirely out of keeping with his age and figure. A voice from the next wharf which wanted to know whether he was going on to the stage, and, if so, whether he was going to wear tights, brought him at once to a more becoming position. His voice was broken with pain, but the masterly fashion in which he dealt with his tormentor's ancestors and the future behaviour of his descendants left nothing to be desired. Uncouth noises, lacking in variety, were the only retort.

"It took me sudden yesterday morning, just arter brekfuss," said the night-watchman. "The woman—if you can call 'er a woman—next door but one 'ad given my missis best part of a tin of salmon. I wondered at the time why she gave it away—now I know. I ate it all, except one mouthful wot my missis threw in the fire-place, and in less than a couple of hours arterwards I thought my last hour 'ad come."

He clasped his hands at the waist-line and rocked to and fro. Faint moans and indignant grunts attested to his suffering.

"I've been taking things for it ever since and nothing seems to do it any good," he resumed, in an interval. "Fust of all I tried a couple o' pints to see wot that 'ud do; and the barman told me to go and die outside. He said wot I ought to 'ave 'ad was rum, so I 'ad a quartern. Arter that 'e *put* me outside—me being too ill to stop 'im—and an old gentleman wot was passing took me into a chemist's shop and stood treat. I don't know wot it was the chemist gave me, but a'most direckly arterwards there was a little crowd round the door peeping in, and behaving theirselves as if I was a Punch and Judy show. Some of 'em follered me 'ome, and it was all my missis could do to stop 'em coming inside and helping 'er put me to bed."

He rose and, stifling a moan, took a few paces up and down the jetty.

"Seems to be passing off a bit for the time," he said, resuming his seat. "It sort o' comes and goes, but it comes longer than it goes. It's funny 'ow soft and kind-'earted illness makes you. Three times yesterday arternoon I called my missis upstairs to tell 'er that I couldn't pass away without letting 'er know I'd forgiven her. She on'y came the first time, but that wasn't my fault. I called 'er loud enough.

"It seems to me to be the same complaint that Ginger Dick had a year or two ago—on'y worse—and he made a great deal more fuss about it, being a free-spoken man and not minding much wot he said about things he didn't like.

"It came on in a public-'ouse in the Commercial Road, and it was so sudden, and Ginger made such a funny noise, that Sam and Peter Russet thought at fust he 'ad swallered 'is pipe.

"'Wot's the matter?' ses the landlord, leaning over the bar.

"'He's swallered 'is pipe,' ses Sam.

"'You're—a—liar,' ses Ginger, groaning.

"'Wot is it, then?' ses the landlord.

"Ginger shook his 'ead. 'I don't know,' he ses in a weak voice. 'I think it's the beer.'

"'Outside,' ses the landlord. 'D'ye 'ear me? *Outside*.'

"Ginger went out with Sam propping 'im up on one side and Peter the other and the landlord shoving 'im behind. His groans was 'art-rending, and the way he talked against beer made Sam and Peter blush for

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shame. They stood on the pavement for a little while and then helped 'im on to a tram-car, and two minutes arterwards the conductor and four or five passengers helped 'im off agin.

"'Wot's to be done now?' ses Sam.

"'Shove 'im in a puddle and leave 'im,' ses Peter, very savage.

"'I can't 'elp it—I feel as if I'd swallered fireworks,' ses Ginger.

"'Little touch o' stummick-ache,' ses Sam.

"'And they keeps going off,' ses Ginger. 'Oh! Oh, my!'

"''Ave you got any pain?' ses Peter. 'That'll do! That'll do! Why can't you give a civil answer to a civil question?'

"He walked on, leaving Ginger 'anging on to Sam and talking at the top of his voice. O' course a crowd got round and told Sam wot to do, until Ginger left off being ill for a little while to attend to a chap as 'ad told Sam to stand 'im on his 'ead. If it 'adn't ha' been for a cab wot 'ad stopped to see wot the row was about Ginger would most likely 'ave been given some medicine by the doctor at the police-station, but, as it was, Sam pushed 'im into the cab and they drove off. Ginger sat on Sam's lap with one arm round 'is neck and one foot sticking out of the winder, and when Sam said they'd both be more comfortable if he sat up on the seat like a Christian, he put 'is other arm round Sam's neck and said if he 'ad any more of 'is lip he'd choke 'im.

"It was a most uncomfortable drive—especially for Sam. When Ginger wasn't groaning he was swearing, with pain, and saying wot 'e would like to do to Sam and Peter and the cabman and landlords and a boy on a bicycle wot 'ad caught 'old of his foot as he passed and tried to pull it off. By the time they got 'ome he was raving, but he kept 'is senses, and neither Sam or the cabman could get the money for the fare out of 'is trowsis pocket, and Sam 'ad to pay it 'imself.

"PETER RUSSET came in just as Sam was trying to take Ginger's boots off without being kicked, and between 'em they got him undressed and made 'im wot they called comfortable, but wot 'e called a lot of other things.

"'He's gorn a nasty colour,' ses Sam to Peter Russet.

"'Like dirty putty,' ses Peter, nodding.

"'It's often like that—just afore the end,' ses Sam in wot 'e thought was a low voice.

"'Wot end?' ses Ginger, sitting up, his eyes 'arf starting out of his 'ead.

"'You lay down, Ginger,' ses Sam in a kind voice; 'you lay down, and 'ope for the best. We're doing all we can for you. If you pass away it won't be our fault.'

"'*Pass away!*' ses Ginger, in a choking voice. 'I ain't going to pass away.'

"'No, no, o' course not,' ses Sam; 'still——'

"'Still wot?' ses Ginger, glaring at 'im.

"'I should stop using that bad langwidge if I was you,' ses Sam.

"'In case,' ses Peter.

"Pore Ginger looked at 'em and then he wiped the perspiration off of 'is face with the sleeve of his shirt and laid down very quiet. Even when Peter Russet sat on 'is foot by mistake he didn't say anything; but no doubt 'is thoughts was just as bad.

"He laid quite quiet for about 'arf an hour, and then, finding that 'e was still alive, he began to pick up 'is spirits a bit. Fust of all he asked Sam if 'e didn't know better than to smoke a filthy pipe, that ought to ha' been thrown away years ago, in a sick mate's bedroom; and arter that he asked Peter if 'e would mind sitting with his back towards 'im, cos he thought as 'e was better-looking that way. He went on like that till they was both tired of listening to 'im, and then all of a sudden the pain come on agin worse than ever. He couldn't describe it to 'em, cos, as soon as he started, the pain come on and he 'ad to leave off to say other things.

"'Try and bear it, Ginger,' ses Peter.

"'Think of all the pore souls wot are in worse pain than wot you are,' ses Sam.

"'And bear it in silence,' ses Peter.

"'With a brave smile on their face,' ses Sam. 'Wot are you getting out of bed for, Ginger?'

"'You'll find out as soon as I get 'old of you,' ses Ginger, 'arf crying with temper.

"Sam put his 'ands up, but afore Ginger could get up to 'im he was took bad agin and 'ad to lean up against the mantelpiece till it was over. Then 'e crawled back to bed, and, arter swallering 'ard three or four times, he fixed 'is eyes where Sam wasn't and asked him, in a perlite voice, to go and fetch 'im a doctor.

"'Why not leave it till to-morrow, Ginger?' ses Sam.

"'Cos I want 'im now,' ses Ginger, getting fierce again.

"Sam and Peter looked at each other, and then, arter saying that it was nearly nine o'clock and they was tired and they supposed most doctors 'ad gone to bed, and they didn't know where to find one, and if they did they didn't suppose he could do Ginger any good, they put on their caps and went out grumbling.

"They walked along for some time with their 'eads down as though they expected to see a doctor sitting on the pavement

waiting for them, and then Sam turned to Peter and asked 'im where they was going.

"'There's one in the Whitechapel Road,' ses Peter.

"'There must be one nearer than that,' ses Sam. 'Let's go in somewhere and ask.'

"They 'appened to be passing the Turk's Head as 'e spoke, and, not wanting everybody to know their business, they went into the private bar instead of the usual, and 'ad a couple o' glasses o' bitter.

"There was on'y one other chap there, a tall young man in a black tail-coat, a bowler 'at, and a collar and necktie. He 'ad a large nose and a pair of very sharp light eyes, and he sat there as if the place belonged to 'im, stroking 'is little sandy moustache and tapping 'is boots with a cane. Sam and Peter could see at once that he never went anywhere except in private bars, and for the fust minute or two they was talking a'most in whispers. They must ha' talked a bit louder arter a bit, cos, all of a sudden, the gentleman emptied 'is glass and spoke to 'em.

"'What's that you want?' he ses. 'A doctor?'

"'Yes,' ses Sam, and the gentleman sat there with a smile on 'is face while Peter and Sam described Ginger's illness and repeated some of 'is remarks about it.

He sat there as if the place belonged to 'im, stroking 'is little sandy moustache.

"'Funny you should tell me,' ses the gentleman.

"Sam looked at 'im, and waited.

"'Cos I'm a doctor myself,' ses the gentleman. 'Dr. Brown.'

"'Wot a bit o' luck!' ses Peter. 'We thought we'd got to walk no end of a way.'

"The doctor shook his 'ead.

"'I'm afraid I'm no good to you,' he ses.

"'Why not?' ses Sam, staring.

"'Too expensive,' ses the doctor. 'You see, I'm a West-end man, and we're not allowed to see a patient under a pound a visit.'

"He shook his 'ead and sat smiling at them sad-like and listening to Sam, wot was sitting perched up on a stool making a noise like bronchitis, with surprise.

"'I on'y come this way for a stroll,' he ses, 'cos I like to see ships and sailormen.'

"'A—pound—a—visit?' ses Peter. 'D'ye 'ear that, Sam?'

"Sam looked at 'im, and arter a time he managed to nod.

"'P'r'aps it does seem a lot,' ses the doctor, 'but it comes cheaper in the end to have a good man.'

"'Not if the chap dies,' ses Peter.

"'My patients don't die,' ses the doctor. 'It's on'y cheap doctors wot loses their patients.'

"He took up 'is glass and then, finding as there was nothing in it, put it down agin. Sam gave a little cough, and arter waiting a moment asked whether 'e would do 'im the pleasure of having a drink with 'im.

"'Well, I've 'ad enough really,' ses the doctor. 'Still, I don't mind 'aving a glass of port with you.'

"Peter said he'd 'ave a port, too, afore Sam could stop 'im, and him and the doctor

sat and drank Sam's 'ealth, and Peter said 'ow well he was looking and wot a fine rosy colour he'd got. Then Sam told the doctor all about Ginger's illness agin and, in a off-hand sort o' way, asked 'im wot Ginger could take for it.

"'I couldn't say without seeing 'im,' ses the doctor; 'it ain't allowed.'

"'Ow much would it be to see 'im?' ses Sam.

"'He ain't much to look at,' ses Peter, looking at him 'opeful-like.

"The doctor laughed, and then shook his 'ead at 'imself. 'Well, I don't know, he says, 'but if you'll keep it a dead secret and not let anybody know that I said—I mean, that I'm a doctor—I don't mind seein 'im for 'arf a dollar a visit.'

"'Ginger couldn't say anything agin that,' ses Peter.

"'Couldn't he?' ses Sam. 'Owever, he'll 'ave to put up with it. It's your turn, Peter; mine's a port.'

"'I suppose I'd better 'ave the same,' says the doctor. 'I don't believe in mixing. Tell 'im to give us the special this time. It's better.'

"Peter told 'im, and the landlord 'ad to tell 'im three times 'ow much it was afore he understood. He seemed 'arf dazed, and the noise Sam made smacking 'is lips over his wine nearly drove 'im crazy.

"THE doctor got up as soon as he 'ad finished 'is glass, and they all went out into the street; Sam and Peter wondering what Ginger would say when 'e saw the doctor and what 'e would do when he 'eard the price. They went upstairs very quiet, as the doctor said he didn't want anybody to see 'im, and the fust thing they saw when they got into the room was Ginger laying face downwards on the bed with 'is arms and legs spread out, groaning.

"'Wot 'ave you been all this time for?' he ses, as soon as he 'eard them. 'You've been gone long enough to find fifty doctors!'

"'This is a good 'un, Ginger,' ses Sam, very solemn. 'One o' the best.'

"'Charges as much as twenty ordinary doctors,' ses Peter.

"'*Wot!*' ses Ginger, turning over with surprise and temper.

"The doctor smiled and, arter fust putting the chair by the side of the bed and sitting down on it, put it back very careful and sat down on the bed instead.

"'Let's have a look at your tongue,' he ses.

"Ginger put it out, and then put it in again to tell Sam that when 'e wanted to 'ear his remarks about it he'd let 'im know.

"'I've seen a worse tongue than that,' ses the doctor. 'Once.'

"'Did 'e die?' ses Ginger.

"'Never mind,' ses the doctor.

"'But I do mind,' ses Ginger, very sharp.

"'No,' ses the doctor; 'I was called in at the last moment and, arter sitting up with 'im all night, pulled 'im through.'

"'I told you wot he was, Ginger,' ses Peter Russet in a whisper that you could have 'eard downstairs.

"The doctor took 'old of Ginger's wrist; and then Sam got into trouble agin for taking upon himself to tell 'im that Ginger 'ad got a natural dark skin. The doctor took out 'is watch and they all 'eld their breath while he counted Ginger's pulse.

"'H'm!' he ses, putting the watch back. 'It's a fortunate thing you met me when you did. Now let's have a look at your chest.'

"Ginger unbuttoned 'is shirt, and the doctor, arter a good look at the ship wot was tattooed there, laid his 'ead on it amidships and listened.

"'Say ninety-nine,' he ses, 'and go on saying it.'

"'Ninety-nine,' ses Ginger, 'ninety-nine, ninety-nine, ninety—if I get up to you, Sam, you'll know it.'

"'You'd laugh yourself if you could on'y see yourself, Ginger,' ses Sam.

"'H'sh!' ses the doctor; 'he 'asn't got much to laugh about, poor chap.'

"He moved his 'ead a bit and told Ginger to keep quiet. Then he sat up and, buttoning Ginger's shirt acrost 'is chest very careful, made a sign to Sam and Peter to keep quiet, and sat thinking.

"'His 'art has moved,' he ses at last; 'it's about two inches out of place.'

"'Good-bye, mates,' ses pore Ginger.

"'There's no need to say 'good-bye,' ses the doctor, very sharp. 'If you'll keep quite quiet and do as I tell you, you'll be all right agin, in time.'

"He sat thinking agin for a bit and then 'e sent Peter downstairs for a jug of 'ot water and a tumbler, and while it was being fetched he told Sam 'e was to be head-nurse and told 'im all he was to do.

"'You don't want to pay two or three pounds a week for a nurse, I suppose?' he ses, when Sam began to speak up for 'imself and tell 'im 'ow he enjoyed 'is sleep.

"'I sha'n't be much trouble to 'im,' ses Ginger. 'I can 'elp myself.'

"'You mustn't move,' ses the doctor. 'You've got to lay quite still. Even if a fly settled on your nose you mustn't brush it off. You don't know 'ow bad you are. I want you to keep per-feck-ly still. Till to-morrow, at any rate.'

"He took the 'ot water from Peter and, arter putting a little cold to it, put 'is arm round Ginger's neck and 'eld the tumbler

to 'is lips. He 'ad four tumblers, one arter the other, except for wot went down 'is chest, and then 'e laid his 'ead back on the piller without a word.

"'That'll do 'im good,' ses the doctor, taking the 'arf-dollar wot Sam got out of Ginger's pocket. 'I'll look round agin in the morning.'

"'And wot about medicine?' ses Sam.

"'I'll bring some with me,' ses the doctor. 'Good-bye.'

"Sam and Peter went to bed early. One thing was there was nothing to do, and another thing was Ginger wouldn't let 'em do it. Every time they moved 'e spoke about it and said wot it did to 'is 'art, and once, when Sam sneezed, 'e called 'im a murderer.

"It was about two o'clock in the morning when Sam woke up from a dream of a beautiful gal with yaller 'air and blue eyes wot kept calling 'im by 'is Christian name. He woke up with a smile on 'is lips and was just shutting 'is eyes to go on dreaming it 'e could, when he 'eard it again.

"'Sam! Sam! Sam! Sam!'

"'Hullo!' he ses, sitting up in bed very cross.

"'I thought you was dead,' ses Ginger. 'I've been calling you for ten minutes or more. It's made my 'art worse.'

"'Wot d'ye want?' ses Sam.

"'I've got a nasty itching feeling between my shoulders,' ses Ginger.

"'D'you mean to say — d'you mean to say you woke me up just to tell me that?' ses Sam, 'ardly able to speak for temper.

"'I woke you up to come and rub it,' ses Ginger. 'And look sharp about it. You know I mustn't move.'

"'Hurry up, Sam,' ses Peter Russet. 'Wot are you waiting for? I want to get to sleep agin.'

"Sam got out o' bed at last and stood rubbing Ginger's back with 'is fist while Ginger kept telling 'im 'ow not to do it, and reminding 'im wot a delikit skin he 'ad got.

"He woke 'im up twice arter that. Once to give 'im a drink of water, and once to ask him 'ow old he thought the doctor was. Wot with being woke up and being afraid of being woke up, Sam 'ardly got a wink of sleep.

"Him and Peter Russet 'ad their brekfuss at a coffee-shop next mornin', and they had 'ardly got back afore the doctor come in. He seemed pleased to 'ear that the pain was better, but 'e told Ginger that he'd 'ave to keep as still as he could for another day or two, and, arter putting 'is face on 'is chest agin, said that the 'art 'ad stopped moving.

**Ginger unbuttoned 'is shirt, and the doctor, arter a good look at the ship wot was tattooed there, laid his 'ead on it amidships and listened.**

"'I mean moving out of place,' he ses, as Ginger sat up making a 'orrible noise and threw 'is arms round his neck. 'To-morrow I 'ope it will begin to move back.'

"He fished a bottle o' medicine out of 'is pocket which he said would be another bob, and, arter telling Sam to 'ave a lump o' sugar ready and pop it in quick, gave Ginger 'is fust dose. Sam popped it in all right, but unfortunately the medicine was so nasty that Ginger was quicker than wot 'e was. Anybody might ha' thought he 'ad been killed the way 'e carried on.

"'I'll look in agin this evening,' ses the doctor as he put a 'arf-dollar and a bob o' Ginger's in his pocket. 'Don't let 'im move more than can be helped and—— Hullo!'

"'Wot's the matter?" ses Sam, taking 'is finger out of 'is mouth and staring at 'im.

"The doctor didn't answer 'im He lifted up 'is eyelids instead and looked at his eyes, and then he told Ginger to open 'is mouth, and looked at 'is teeth. Then he looked at Sam agin and felt all round 'is throat.

"'Wot is it?' ses Sam, going pale.

"'It might be blood-poisoning,' ses the doctor, 'but I can't tell yet. His teeth are in a very bad state.'

"'Ow shall I know if it is?' ses Sam.

"'You'll know fast enough,' ses the doctor, shaking his 'ead. 'P'raps you'd better 'ave a quiet time at 'ome to-day and keep your friend company, and I'll 'ave a look at you when I come in this evening. Keep your spirits up and be as cheerful as you can—for 'is sake.'

"He left 'em all staring at each other; and then Sam sat down on 'is bed and told Peter Russet wot ought to be done to Ginger before England would be fit for decent people to live in. Peter said it was a wonder 'ow he could think of it all, and Ginger said it was because he 'ad got a nasty mind, and he told 'im wot he'd do to 'im when 'e got well agin.

"They spent most of the day quarrelling, and only left off to find fault with Peter when 'e came in from enjoying 'imself to see 'ow they was getting on. Sam was the worst, cos Ginger was afraid of 'is 'art if he got too excited, but arter the doctor saw 'im in the evening 'e was as quiet as Ginger was.

"He said the poison 'ad got from Sam's finger down into 'is liver and an abscess was forming there. He showed Sam where 'is liver was—a thing he 'adn't known afore—and found out where the abscess was with 'is thumb-nail. He found it twice, and was just going to find it agin when Sam pulled 'is shirt down.

"'There's no danger,' he ses, 'if you do just wot I tell you. If you keep quite quiet like your friend does, I'll 'ave you up agin in a week. If you move about or 'ave any violent shock you'll die afore you know where you are.'

"He sat talking with 'em for a little while, and, arter saying that Ginger's 'art was not going back as fast as he could wish, 'e took 'is money and went off. Peter sat looking at 'em till Sam asked 'im whether he thought they was waxworks, and then, arter punching up their pillers and tickling Ginger's toes, playful-like, 'e picked up 'is cap and went out.

"HE spent most of 'is time out, and, when 'e did come in, all he could talk about was the drinks he'd been 'aving and 'ow glad 'e was that *his* 'art and liver was as sound as a bell.

"'I wonder you ain't sick of bed,' he ses, arter Ginger had 'ad four days of it.

"'Sick of it!' ses Ginger, choking. 'Sick of it! Why, you ugly, mutton-faced son of a——'

"'Mind your 'art, Ginger,' ses Sam.

"'I don't believe in doctoring and laying in bed,' ses Peter, picking 'is teeth with a pin. 'I believe that if you and Sam was to get up and 'ave a little dance in your shirts it 'ud do you all the good in the world. *I'd* 'um to you.'

"'Mind your 'art, Ginger,' ses Sam, very quick.

"Ginger minded it, but they was both so disagreeable that Peter got up and went out agin and didn't come back until the pubs was closed. He woke 'em both up getting to bed, but when they tried to wake *'im* up arterwards they might as well 'ave tried to wake the dead. All they did was to wake each other up and then 'ave words about it.

"They wouldn't speak to Peter when 'e got up next morning, and, arter giving 'em both wot 'e called a bit of 'is mind, but wot other people would 'ave called nasty langwidge, 'e flung Ginger's trowsis into Sam's face and went off for the day.

"He didn't come back until six o'clock, but when 'e did come back 'e was a reg'lar sunbeam, smiling all over 'is face. He 'ad a look at Ginger and smiled, and then 'e went and smiled at Sam, with his 'and over 'is mouth.

"'He's drunk,' ses Sam, trying to sneer.

"'Mad *and* drunk,' ses Ginger.

"Peter didn't say anything. He went and sat down on 'is bed and covered up 'is face with his 'ankerchief and the bed shook as if there was an earthquake sitting on it.

"'Ow—'ow—'ow's the 'art, Ginger?' he ses at last.

"Ginger didn't answer 'im.

He didn't come back until six o'clock, but when 'e did come back 'e was a reg'lar sunbeam, smiling all over 'is face.

"'And Sa—Sa—Sam's pore old liver!' ses Peter, going off agin.

"He wiped 'is eyes at last, and then 'e got up and walked up and down the room fighting for 'is breath and saying 'ow it hurt 'im. And when he saw them two pore invalids laying in bed and looking at each other 'elpless, 'e sat down and laughed till 'e cried.

"'It's the d-d-doctor,' he ses at last. 'The—the landlord told me.'

"'Told you wot?' ses Ginger, grinding 'is teeth.

"'He—he ain't a doctor,' ses Peter, wiping 'is eyes; 'he's a bookmaker's clerk, and you won't see 'im agin cos the police are arter 'im.'

"You might have 'eard a pin drop, as the saying is, if it 'adn't ha' been for the choking noise in Sam's throat.

"'You ought to 'ave 'eard the landlord laugh when I told 'im about you and Sam,' ses Peter. 'It would ha' done you good. 'Ow much money 'as he 'ad off of you, Ginger?'

"Ginger didn't answer 'im. He got out of bed very slow, and put on 'is boots and 'is trowsis. Then 'e got up and locked the door

"'Wot are you doing that for?' ses Sam, wot was sitting on the edge of 'is bed putting on 'is socks.

"'I'm going to give Peter something else to laugh about,' ses Ginger."

# The PURSE

By J. J. BELL

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

IN the same instant they caught sight of it—the girl and man walking towards each other, downcast and rather listless, in the autumnal dusk of the park—the little brown pigskin purse lying near the edge of the turf bordering the path. They must have been aware of each other's approach, for they were within a few yards of each other when they saw it; but there was no apparent attempt at dignified restraint on either side. Equidistant from the purse both swerved, darted forward, stooped, and grabbed. The man, in spite of a slight limp, was the quicker. His bare lean hand was just in front of her shabbily-gloved one.

They drew themselves erect, and for a space looked in each other's faces, hers showing an anger that swiftly dissolved in shame, his a triumph overwhelmed immediately in distress. He raised his hat, saying gravely:—

"I beg your pardon. I'm afraid I forgot myself." And he held out the purse.

Her gaze fell upon it, lingered, rose to his face again, and fell back. Faintly frowning, she slowly shook her head. He had time to note that the hair was fair, that the blue-grey eyes held a tired, if not a hunted, look; time, too, to judge that she was very pretty in a pale, refined way. She had had a glimpse of a thin, well-featured face above a frayed white collar.

"Take it, please," he said. "I'm convinced that you saw it first."

Her smile came only to vanish. "I think we have both forgotten, perhaps," she returned, with a gentleness of manner suggesting a reluctance to offend, "that, in any case, it cannot belong to either of us."

"True." He threw a glance up and down the path, never a busy one, and at this hour deserted. "But we are at least permitted," he said, weighing the purse in his hand, "to see what it contains."

Her expression gave assent; then abruptly she drew back, saying, "I must leave that to you," and made to pass on.

"Please, don't go," he said, quickly. "One never knows what may come from the finding of a purse. You would do a poor man a real kindness by bearing witness to his counting the contents. It is possible we may discover the name of the owner; failing that, there is the police. In either case we are entitled—I am almost certain of that—to a reward of ten per cent. of the money."

"That may be," she said. "But you must not include me. It was you, and you only, who actually found it."

"Is it necessary to remind me of something I am ashamed of?" he exclaimed. "Kindly say that you will witness my counting the money, and——"

"Yes, I will do that."

"And take your share of the reward?" Once more she shook her head.

"But you must!"

"There is no 'must' about it!" Her chin went up.

"Forgive me; I'm clumsy," he said. "I meant to say——"

"Don't!"

"But can't you understand my feelings, even if you won't consider them?"

"I'm sorry. I suppose I must seem horribly ungracious, but I—I just can't accept—ch-charity. There, I've said it!" And suddenly her mouth quivered, her blue eyes filled.

"This is absurd!" he cried helplessly.

"It isn't! Suppose I had got first to the purse and——"

"Spare me!"

"——and then offered you a share of——"

"That's an entirely different proposition! A man can't——"

"Rubbish!" A pause. "I promised to watch you count the money," she said,

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stiffly, "so please do it, and then I will go. I—I have a rather important engagement—h'm—dinner at the Ritz Hotel."

The young man may be pardoned if he stared just for a moment. It was two years since he had last worn a dress shirt, but he remembered enough about things to be aware that the girl's attire, though becoming, was threadbare, and that girls did not, even in these days, dine at the Ritz in a coat and skirt. Moreover, she had called it "the Ritz Hotel." And, above all, he had detected in her face that which he knew too well in his own. All of which was an instantaneous reflection.

"Don't let us quarrel about it," he said. "I'm only asking—begging—you to oblige me by taking a——" He halted. "Why"—as with a brilliant inspiration—"there may be only coppers in the purse!"

"No!" exclaimed the girl, and stamped her foot, which is about the only thing girls do in these times just as they did it in the days of the good Queen Victoria. In the interests of the girls themselves the action ought to be forbidden, because it betokens unreason as much as indignation; and from the man's point of view, because—well, because it puts him at a disadvantage. A man who stamps his foot looks like a bullock, and knows it.

But while this young man did not respond with a stamp, he did something nearly as idiotic.

"Very good!" he said, dashed the purse almost accurately upon the spot from which he had picked it, and walked away. Pray do not smile at him. He had eaten nothing since breakfast; and not very much then.

And woman, who, after all, can, when she likes, be more practical than any man alive—woman, in the shape of this poor girl, who had spent her last pence on a cup of tea at 11.55 a.m., made all the difference by calling:—

"Oh, don't be silly! Do come back!"

He came back as slowly as he could.

"Well?" he demanded, with a queer haughtiness acquired from a year's experience of unemployment.

She pointed to the purse.

"What about it?" he asked, shortly.

"M'm—aren't you hungry?" There was certainly no unkindness in the question.

"Hungry? Good Lord, no! I had an excellent lunch with a friend at the—er—Savoy. And what has hunger got to do with that rotten purse?" His look was magnificent—so magnificent that it produced a lump in her throat.

"Will you kindly pick up the rotten purse—which appears to me as almost new," she managed to say, "and count the money—and—and let me go? If I hadn't promised to witness——" Her voice failed.

"I won't touch the beastly thing unless you promise to share the reward—which may be half nothing," he said, eyeing her dourly. "And—God help us—you're just as hungry as I am!"

"I'm not!" she cried, and her hands flew to her face.

He picked up the purse and stood erect—and had you been there you would have guessed he was feeling a little giddy.

"Look here!" he said, pointing vaguely at a seat near by, "let's sit down and—and see if there's anything for us. The murder's out, and we can face each other."

"Yes," she replied, letting fall her hands, with a sigh that seemed the last of a long endurance, "let's!"

IT is one of the big moments of life when the wills of a man and woman combine—because they must.

On the seat, in the tones of that levity which sometimes, and somehow, makes itself heard just before the chloroform mask comes down, he said:—

"From the feel of it I'm sure there's more than coppers here; in fact, I suspect notes!"

"Don't let's deceive each other, or ourselves," she returned, with a little gasp. "If—if you like, I'll admit that I'm a—a bit hungry, and I'm afraid I'm a—a bit late for my engagement at the Piccadilly Hotel."

As a gentleman he did not draw attention to the discrepancy. "It's horrid to be rushed, isn't it? No dinner's worth it," he said, and unbuttoned the flap of the purse. "But, all the same, do let us be prepared for about one-and-ninepence." He shook the purse, emptying its contents into her lap.

"Oh!" she exclaimed; "what a lot of money!"

"Isn't it beautiful? Nothing so beautiful as money, when you have none! But," he went on soberly, "we're entitled only to ten per cent. of it. Will you count?"

"I—I can't!"

"Righto." He surveyed the mixture and then began to handle it gingerly. "Odd!" he said presently. "There's just one of each! A fiver, a pound note, a ten-shilling note, a half-crown, a florin, a bob, a sixpence, a threepenny, a penny, a ha'-penny—I say, doesn't it look rather like a trap?"

"Don't say that! It would be too wicked!" said the girl. "How—how much is it altogether?" After all, her counting was quicker than his. "Six pounds sixteen

shillings and fourpence ha'penny," she announced.

"So you have been in business!" he said.

"Why 'have been'?"

"I beg your pardon!"

She relaxed. "I beg yours. I've been out of a berth for ages."

"Same here," he said. "That's why I'm so hungry. And—and hungry people might as well be honest with each other, don't you think?"

"I've been trying not to think—but is it really and truly the case that we are entitled to ten per cent. of this money?" She folded up the five-pound note as though she had no use for it—and began to refill the purse.

"What is ten per cent. of six sixteen four-and-a-half?" he asked. "I've a bit of a headache."

"Roughly, thirteen shillings and sevenpence three-farthings."

"You ought to be Governess of the Bank of England!"

She echoed his feeble laugh.

"But you can't," he went on, "divide thirteen shillings seven and three farthings by two."

"Not neatly," she admitted. "Still——"

"Still, together, you and I could get a nice little dinner out of it." He paused at her look of horror.

"May I ask if you usually spend six shillings on your dinner?"

"Lord, no! But on a special occasion like this—— Forgive me! I seem to have got light-headed for the moment. Forgot that all the money wasn't mine."

"I know," she said, sympathetically. "Hunger affects one queerly sometimes." She turned back the flap of the purse. "Oh, look! There's a name here!"

"D——n!"

"Really!"

"Once more forgive me. It's so long since I dined decently, I——"

"Listen!" She read out the neatly printed name and address—

Mr. J. M. Smith,
13, Gloriana Road,
Hampstead, N.W.

"Nice address," he muttered; "but I know a nicer—a little restaurant in Shaftesbury Avenue——"

Her hand in its poor mended glove went up. "Excuse me, but after what you have said I feel I ought to ask an impertinent question. Have you *any* money—of your own?"

"Not a penny!"

"Nor I," she said simply.

He caught at the purse and re-emptied it into her lap. "There!"

She shuddered slightly. "No." Her eyes, rather than her lips, said it.

"But ten per cent. of it—or, if we must be precise, five per cent.—is yours."

"Nothing of it is mine, or yours, or—or ours—at present. The reward, if any—we had better not be too certain—is due only when the purse is returned to the owner." Once more she began to replace the money.

He was taken aback.

"Now you are *too* precise!" he said at last. "We shall simply take the liberty of deducting the reward in advance. The circumstances justify our doing so. Why, in the name of Hunger," he went on warmly, "should we take any chances? This Mr. J. M. Smith may be an old skinflint, or he may not be at home, or——"

"We can simplify all that by taking the purse to the nearest police-station."

"And then how long should we have to wait for the reward? No, no! I want it *now*—and so do you! Allow me." He reached out for the purse.

But this time her hand was before his.

"Wait!" Her voice was a little hoarse. "Can't you see how you are tempting me? And only a few minutes ago I was thanking you in my heart for having saved me from temptation. For if I had been alone I should surely have kept this money—stolen it——"

"Oh, nonsense! You could not——"

"Ah, one feels so honest till the money is in one's hand, with a hundred needs crying for it. Oh, I *know* I should have given way."

HIS thoughts were clearer now, his wits more under control. He was watching the pretty profile, so pale in the half-darkness, and there was a fervour in his tones as he said: "Nothing would ever convince me that you could do such a thing. A girl like you—why, it's impossible!"

The ghost of a smile flickered and was gone. "Still," she said slowly, "you must not make it too hard for me. To take the reward in advance might not be dishonest, but it would be dangerous—too dangerous—for me, at any rate. You see, once the money were broken into, I might want a little more, and a little more, and then a——" She stopped with a wistful sigh that moved him far more deeply than many words could have done.

"All right!" he said, abruptly. "You sha'n't be hurt or made unhappy by me. I'll clear out, and you can take it to the police. Ask the first officer you meet to direct you." He made to get up.

"No, no!" she cried in a panic. "You must not leave me! Don't you understand yet? I—I might not go to the police after

all. You must stay with me—come with me to the police."

"Sorry; but while I admire your stern principles I can't make them mine. I still believe we should be justified in annexing a part of that money, and I can't hope for any immediate satisfaction from the police, and I couldn't stick the suspense——"

He dashed the purse upon the spot from which he had picked it, and walked away.

"Oh, don't be silly! Do come back!" she called.

"Oh, don't let's go over it all again," she pleaded, "or I shall grow weak once more."

He rose and stood looking down on her with his kindly hollow eyes. "You poor little darling!" he said to himself; and aloud: "Come; let me see you to the gates—and give you in charge, if you like."

She seemed lost in thought. "But what are you going to do?" she suddenly asked. "About food, I mean."

"Oh, I know where I can get food—by begging for it. Forgive me, I oughtn't to have put it so crudely."

The blue eyes were big with horror. "Begging!"

"Oh, not on the street, you know. From people who despise me as a failure. But

I shall try to manage to do without to-night."

She held out the purse. "Take it! You are worse off than I. I can get food from people who love me so much that they would starve themselves, if I asked them. Please take it, and do just what you feel is right."

"And you will come with me?" he cried eagerly.

"No."

His hand which had gone out fell empty to his side. He gave a small weak laugh. "It seems we have come to a deadlock," he said.

"I beg you to take it," she faltered.

"I won't touch it unless you will promise to take your share—now."

"I can't do that." And all at once she sobbed and hid her face. "Oh, you are cruel!" she said. "You make me feel a horrid little prig. But if I lose my honesty I'll have nothing left—nothing at all; and this money terrifies me. There is so much I could do with it. Don't leave me alone with it."

"Don't give way like that," he said gently, nay, tenderly. "Can't you believe that I'm thinking of you as well as myself? It's because I know what hunger is that I want you to have food—now—at once. Can't you believe that?"

She nodded, murmuring, "I do believe you mean to be kind, but——"

"Look here! Listen! I told you I wasn't going to take any chances, but I'm ready to compromise on that. I'm willing to go to Hampstead, taking the risk of finding the man a skinflint, or not at home. If we're lucky I shall get the reward on the spot—I'll insist on that—and then——"

"Yes," she broke in, "take the purse and go to Hampstead! He can't object to your paying your fare out of it."

"Our fares, if you please! Do you imagine I shall go alone? Do you think the money has no temptations for me? Aren't you going to help me to keep straight?" He bent forward and touched her lightly on the arm. "Perhaps there's a reason for this odd meeting of ours. For the time being, at least, it seems as though we—we needed each other. Come with me to Hampstead. You shall not be tempted, as you put it. If the owner is absent—well, we can leave the purse with a note of explanation—and go on being hungry. I promise you that much."

"Very well. I will come with you. Take the purse." She got up—and swayed.

For a moment his arm was round her.

"Silly of me, but I'm all right now," she said.

"Won't you take an arm till you feel quite steady?"

"It isn't necessary—well, just for a minute, if you don't mind." She gave a nervous laugh. "I thought I was stronger . . ."

"I know very well how you feel. Please try to trust me—to take me for a gentleman."

At that she smiled. "Haven't you been educating me in that direction since you offered me the purse? But what a queer world it is! Here we are walking together, and don't even know each other's names and——" She stumbled, and apologized.

"I'm anxious about you," he said. "Won't you let me spend a little of the money now—just the price of a little soup, or something, to keep you going?"

"Not necessary. I'm no hungrier than you. I'm feeling fitter every second. The walk is doing me good—really it is." But she held to his arm. "Suppose," she said presently, "we don't mention the money again till we get to Hampstead?"

"As you will," he replied. "Only I want you to let me take you there in a taxi."

"A taxi! Goodness me! There wouldn't be any reward left!"

"Mr. J. M. Smith can jolly well pay, and I should say he'll be delighted to do so."

"You are becoming light-headed again! But, seriously, I'm quite equal to going by Tube. Don't let's argue, please. Let's talk of something else."

CONVERSATION was slow at first, but gained in freedom during the walk to the Tube station; and by the end of the journey they knew each other's names and something of each other's circumstances and misfortunes. The misfortunes were quite commonplace—merely those of two well-brought-up, spirited young people out of employment, their reserves gone, desperately facing the grim spectre of—Charity.

"So we're both at the limit," he said as they left the train. "To-morrow I must swallow the leek and ask for help, which, at best, will be grudgingly given."

"And I, too, must go to people who don't love me. I can't rob those who do. Yes; it's dreadful to be beaten!"

"Have you actually given in?" he asked softly.

"Not just yet. One keeps on putting hopes in the morning postman. Why, goodness knows! Of course I know in my heart that he will bring me nothing." She sighed, then smiled.

"You are brave. You help one. And I refuse to accept the knock-out before I have interviewed Mr. J. M. Smith. A good meal would make a difference. And six shillings in one's pocket! Heavens, what wealth it

seems!" They smiled together. "Well," he said lightly, "I'd better inquire the direction of Gloriana Road. Sounds as if it might be paved with gold bricks."

Gloriana Road did not, however, suggest riches. Its houses were unpretentious little dwellings, and No. 13 was in no wise distinguished among its neighbours. The young man glanced from its modest portals to his companion's face.

"Mr. J. M. Smith is not, according to outward appearances, a plutocrat," he remarked. "Still, though he has an unlucky number, he is probably good for the ten per cent. And would you mind taking my arm again? If you are feeling the suspense as much as I—well, we've got to support each other, haven't we? Thank you. And I wonder if you could bring yourself to admit something before we go in. It would help me a lot."

"What is that?"

"That you and I need each other—just for the time being, of course."

"Yes," she whispered, "I—I think it is true." And for the life of her she could not have helped her hand closing softly on his arm.

He opened the low wooden gate. A few paces brought them to the door.

"Here's luck!" he said, and pressed the button. "Why, you're shivering!"

"S-so are you. Sort of thrilling, isn't it, wondering what Mr. Smith will be like?"

"On the brink of the unknown—yes! But something tells me that Mr. Smith is a white man, in the best sense of the term."

"You are saying that to encourage me."

"And myself. By the way, there may be a Mrs. Smith."

"Oh, I hope not. I'm a perfect ticket! But what does that matter?" And she giggled weakly at herself.

"'Sh!" he whispered. "Someone is coming—someone with a big, generous footfall."

The door was opened by a large woman in black, with housekeeper and good humour writ plain on her person. Yes; Mr. Smith was at home——

Our young man caught her up at once. Would she kindly tell Mr. Smith that they had called to restore a purse of money bearing his name? At that she smiled and bade them enter and wait for a moment till she informed Mr. Smith. A minute later she was showing them into a comfortably-appointed library.

FROM the writing-table rose a man small of stature, with a bald, shiny head, round, plump, clean-shaven face, with bright eyes behind circular glasses. Smiling, he skipped rather than stepped forward, and directed the girl to an easy-chair.

"Pray be seated, ma'am." He turned to the other visitor. "And will you, sir, have the kindness to tell me your name and present me to your wife?"

"My name is Leonard Somers," said the young man, ruddier than he had been for many a day. "Mr. Smith—Miss Stella Waring."

"Ah," said Mr. Smith with a bow, "your *fiancée!*"

"Your purse," said Leonard rather curtly, thinking of his companion's feelings.

"My thanks. Be seated, Mr. Somers." Mr. Smith returned to his chair, dropping the purse on the table. "And may I ask which of you found it?"

"Mr. Somers," replied the girl.

"Miss Waring," said the young man in the same instant.

"How very extraordinary!" exclaimed the elderly gentleman, looking from one to the other.

"As a matter of fact," Leonard explained, "Miss Waring saw the purse, and I picked it up. Therefore we both found it."

"H'm! If I were a precisian," said Mr. Smith, smiling, "I should say that your *fiancée* found it, or, at least, discovered it."

"Miss Waring and I, "said Leonard, stiffly, "met this evening for the first time, and your purse, Mr. Smith, was the cause of our meeting."

"Really!" Mr. Smith fairly beamed on both. "How extremely delightful! Would you mind," he went on eagerly, "giving me the episode in detail? It is of the greatest interest to me. Of course, I am grateful to you both for restoring my purse, or, to be precise, one of my purses. You see"—he drew open a drawer, disclosing perhaps a dozen purses all of the same pattern—"I have quite a number, and there are others in circulation. I confess to making a habit of losing purses. Losing purses is, in fact, my hobby; getting them back is my chief delight. You'd be amazed at the honesty of London people! Of course, some purses never come back, but they are few—very few, I do assure you." And Mr. Smith paused as if for applause.

Stella's eyes were bright with indignation. She was about to speak, but Leonard was before her.

"Mr. Smith," he said hotly, "you are playing a most infernally cruel game!"

"What's that?" cried the little man, blankly. "Cruel?"

"Wicked!" the girl put in, but faintly.

"Wicked?"

"Tempting poor people," said Leonard, "to become dishonest."

"Great Heaven!" Mr. Smith had the look of a child whose castle of cards has been knocked down.

"I'm sure," said the girl, all at once pitiful, "you don't mean it to work in that way, but it must do so sometimes—it nearly did to-night." The last sentence was spoken so softly that he may not have caught it. The little man was a picture of dismay.

"Possibly that side of it has never occurred to you," said Leonard, also with compunction. "You have been taken up with the satisfaction of finding so many honest people. Miss Waring will, I think, take back the word she used."

"Yes, I will," said Stella. "But I do call it dangerous."

"No one," said Mr. Smith feebly, "has ever made such remarks to me before. I can't think why I'm not very angry. Too shocked, perhaps." With his handkerchief he wiped his brow. "Mind you," he proceeded, "I don't admit myself in fault, but I will tell you how I started what you, Mr. Somers, have called a cruel game."

"I'll call it a grave risk, Mr. Smith."

"Pray don't call it anything till I have told my story, which won't take long." Mr. Smith sighed heavily and proceeded. "Many years ago, when I was a young man, I found a purse such as you found in the park to-night. The owner's name was on it, and I took it to him and received his thanks, also a small reward. He was a queer, gruff person—mean, I thought him—and though I never met him again, he wrote me a short letter of good wishes every New Year. I fancy he was alone in the world. Well, a year ago he died and left me a good going business and a considerable fortune besides. I had never been well off, had never acquired any expensive tastes, nor a desire for display; and I, too, was pretty much alone in the world. I had to do something with the money, and I wanted to do something personal. And so I started my hobby, at first in a small way, and later more lavishly. It has helped me to get rid of quite a lot of money, because, you see, unless the finder absolutely refuses to accept the gift, I do not take back the contents of the purse. But better far than any amusement, my hobby has brought me into touch with honest persons in need whom—believe me, I say it humbly—I have been privileged in being able to help. That is all." Again he sighed. "But I confess your view of it has hurt me. More than that I must not say till I have thought it over."

He turned to the table and took up the lately restored purse. With a rueful little smile he regarded his visitors, saying:—

"I take it that, with your view of my hobby, you, my young friends, will refuse to honour me by accepting the contents." And he tossed the purse into the drawer, which he shut.

Leonard, heartsick with the revulsion, glanced fearfully at Stella. But she seemed not to have heard. She was lying back in the easy-chair, her half-veiled gaze on the fire.

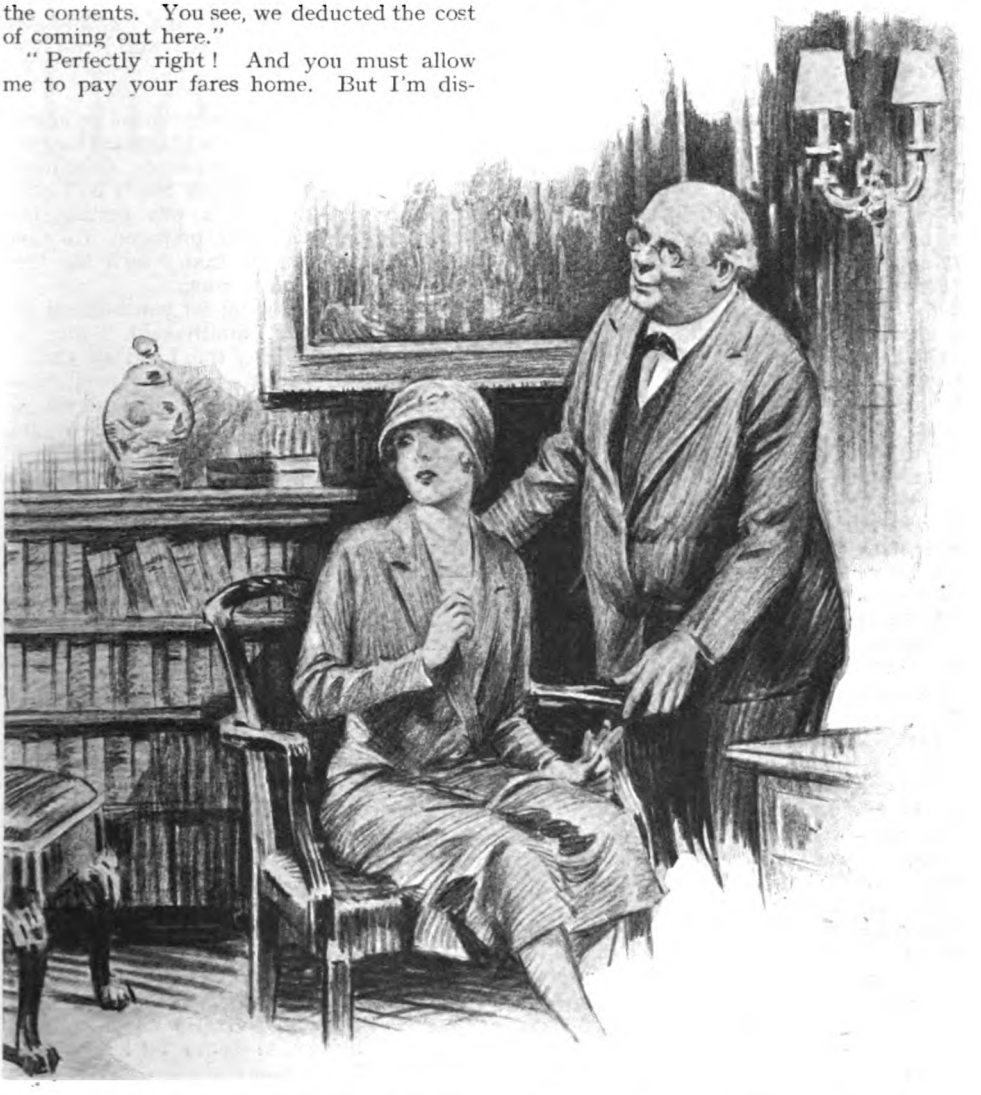
"Mr. Smith," he said, hoarsely.

"Yes, Mr. Somers?"

"Mr. Smith, we should like you to count

the contents. You see, we deducted the cost of coming out here."

"Perfectly right! And you must allow me to pay your fares home. But I'm dis-



**"Will you, sir, have the kindness to tell me your name and present me to your wife?"**

tressed that you disapprove of my scheme." And once more Mr. Smith sighed.

With a desperate effort Leonard said: "Mr. Smith, I'm not sure that it was perfectly right to deduct anything, and so I must tell you that when Miss Waring and I found the purse we had not a penny between us."

"Not a penny between you!" Mr. Smith sat slowly erect; his eyes grew nearly as round as his glasses. "Do you mean——?" he asked, cautiously, yet with ill-suppressed excitement in his voice.

Leonard bowed his head. His words were a mere whisper.

"Mr. Smith, she and I are at the limit.'"

Whereupon there dawned upon Mr. Smith's plump countenance an expression for which there is but one word—beautiful. "And so," he whispered back, "I can be of service after all."

To Leonard's senses several things in the room appeared to have started a dance; but he got a grip on himself and looked over at Stella. Now she was lying strangely still, her eyes closed.

"Your *fiancée*—beg pardon—your lady friend is surely very pale," Mr. Smith murmured, sympathetically.

"She—she's starving," gulped the young man, and hid his face.

"Good God, can such things be?" cried Mr. Smith, jumping up, his eyes full of tears. He stumbled to the bell, rang it, tore off his glasses, wiped his vision clear, and made for the door, calling over his shoulder, "Excuse me just for a moment."

Leonard rose unsteadily and went over to the girl. Just then it seemed as though he had known her for a long time.

"Stella, don't let go," he said. "I think it's going to be all right."

"Forgive me for being so silly," she replied. "I'm not going to faint—just awfully limp, you know. I—I heard what he said, the old dear!"

Holding to the chair back, for a dull heaviness was upon him, he said: "Does hunger make one mad? I feel that you and I may never be so near again, and there's something I want of you very badly."

"What is it?"

"The feel of your hand, Stella."

She looked up at him. "Is that all—after all you have done for me?" she said, softly.

"I've done nothing. Only, we've been in hell together, and——and——"

"And, as you say, we may never again be so near—and perhaps hunger does make one a little mad—and here is my hand, Leonard."

"Oh, it was true," he said somewhat wildly, "true that I needed you to-night—and I think I shall need you always!" He bent lower—lower.

Mr. Smith came in a second or so too late to be astounded.

"My housekeeper is preparing supper—something light and nourishing and, I hope, appetizing. She knows what is best. It will be ready in no time." He opened a box of cigarettes. "I think Miss Waring ought to rest for the present, but if Mr. Somers feels up to it, he and I might have a little chat." He beamed on them both. "Do you know, something tells me I'm going to be the happiest man in the world to-night. Come, Mr. Somers."

A GOOD meal, especially a meal so appropriate to existing conditions as that provided by the housekeeper, does make a difference. After supper Stella was quite equal to a chat, and it was getting late when she and Leonard prepared to take their departure in the taxi, which the host had insisted on summoning.

"Well, I'll be looking for you both at my office at ten," Mr. Smith said, "and"—pressing a purse into the hand of each—"you can arrange to repay it from your future salaries—that is, if you desire to hurt me cruelly. And now good night, and God bless us all!"

The cab rolled away. After a little while Stella dried her eyes.

"It's like a fairy tale," she said. "Don't tell me I fell asleep in the park and am still dreaming."

"It's too good to be untrue," said Leonard. "And I'm still near you. Perhaps I ought to call you Miss Waring now."

"Perhaps you ought," she said, soberly, and there was a silence. "Though I seem to have known you quite a long time," she added. Then, rather hurriedly, "But isn't he the dearest dear? And so like a cherub! I suspect wings."

"I suspect," said Leonard, "a little bow and arrow. You see, I am not sane yet."

"One can't become sane all at once, can one?" she said, leniently.

"It is possible that mine is a hopeless case," he sighed—and covered a yawn.

"It is surely too early to say that," she returned from her corner—and followed his example.

"A week hence, perhaps?"

"Even that would seem a bit hasty, don't you think?"

"Well, a month? Stella—a month?"

"M'm!" she murmured, thoughtfully.

And as Leonard had to leave it at that, we may do the same.

# The Rose Cavaliers

By

G.R.MALLOCH

*ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.*

IT was a quiet day in this temporarily quiet bit of the eastern line. The German trenches bulged away from ours to avoid a stretch of marsh, beloved of both armies, for even under this hot August sun it was scarcely passable by day and dangerous at night; and in winter it was a deep bog. True, miasmic vapours rose from it at nights, and at certain seasons the croaking of frogs and swarms of mosquitoes made life a little more unbearable to nerve-frayed men; but the occupants of the trenches which ran along the rising ground on either side accepted these hardships of campaigning philosophically, reflecting that their lot would have been a very different one had the surface of no-man's land been of firmer texture.

Lieutenant Norman Drew was not on duty, and he was glad as he sat in the coolness of the dug-out. A mail had arrived and he had been reading his letters contentedly. Nothing very much of interest, his more ardent friends might have thought, had they seen his correspondence, for Norman had no girl when he joined up and had not acquired one since. Letters from one or two friends and a long one from his mother made up his little budget. And his mother's letter was nearly all about the garden at Whitehouse, and the rose garden especially, giving an almost catalogue-like account of what was growing there. But Norman's mother knew what interested Norman. His mother, his business, and his roses were the three great interests of his life. And now he had learned that his mother was well, that the business was prospering, and that the rose garden, fondly cared for, was flourishing. In evidence of this she enclosed with her letter a bloom of "Juliet Hole," the only Juliet for whom Norman cherished a passion—"Juliet Hole," the wonderful coppery-pink rose, whose merits he had been the first to recognize, and of which he was perhaps the best grower. He sniffed it appreciatively; it was quite fresh, for the long stem had been wrapped carefully in damp moss and oiled paper. "I must show this to Doumic," thought Norman. "This will perhaps make him admit that 'Juliet Hole' is the best Hybrid Tea in existence."

The Marsh of La Follette marked the junction of the English and French lines, and Norman had perforce become acquainted with Lieutenant Doumic, whose duties began where his ended. Some chance of conversation revealed that Doumic also grew roses, and the two immediately became friends. At the best of times a common hobby makes friends of those who follow it, and one has false notions of human nature, and of amateur rose-growers in particular, if one imagines that even a war can make them forget altogether their pet occupation. Drew was not a poet and could not find distraction in composing verses on the beauty of the England from which he was exiled, as some of his comrades did; but there was consolation in thought of his roses. Doumic was a philosopher whose philosophy carried him through scenes of horror but permitted him to love a garden passionately. A rose garden was common ground to them, and they took care not to lose any opportunity of discussing their craft. Deep and learned were their talks of soils and stocks, grafting and budding, form, shape, colour, manures, diseases, pruning, and similar subjects. On most points they agreed sufficiently to recognize in each other a master of the art; only on one subject did they differ to an extent that was at times almost acrimonious, for it was a thing near to their hearts. "Juliet Hole" was the finest rose in cultivation, according to the verdict of Norman Drew; but it was "Madame Leonie" who reigned as

queen in Doumic's garden at Fontainebleau, and was first in his regard. But Doumic had admitted that "Juliet Hole" was a stranger to him. Very well: now was the time to convince him.

Drew placed "Juliet" carefully in a pocket, stepped out into the sunlight, and made his way cautiously to Doumic's quarters. He was told that Doumic also was off duty and would probably be found at an *estaminet* behind the lines. Thither Norman went, smiling to himself as he guessed just where he would find Doumic. There was a shattered villa in the place, and in the garden of that villa there were a few rose bushes, grown wild in neglect till Doumic found them. Now they had been reduced to some sort of order; there Doumic, when he had a spare hour or two, would repair, for nothing pained him more than the sight of a neglected or ill-treated rose bush. And there Norman found him, gently breaking up the hard soil round the bushes to let in air and moisture.

He was not disappointed with the impression made upon his friend by "Juliet Hole" when he carefully unwrapped her and disclosed the glowing beauty to the other's sceptical eye. "It is magnificent!" cried Doumic, after a momentary examination. "It has colour—form—a richness! It is superb, my friend. One cannot deny that. But 'Madame Leonie' is of a colour equally exquisite——"

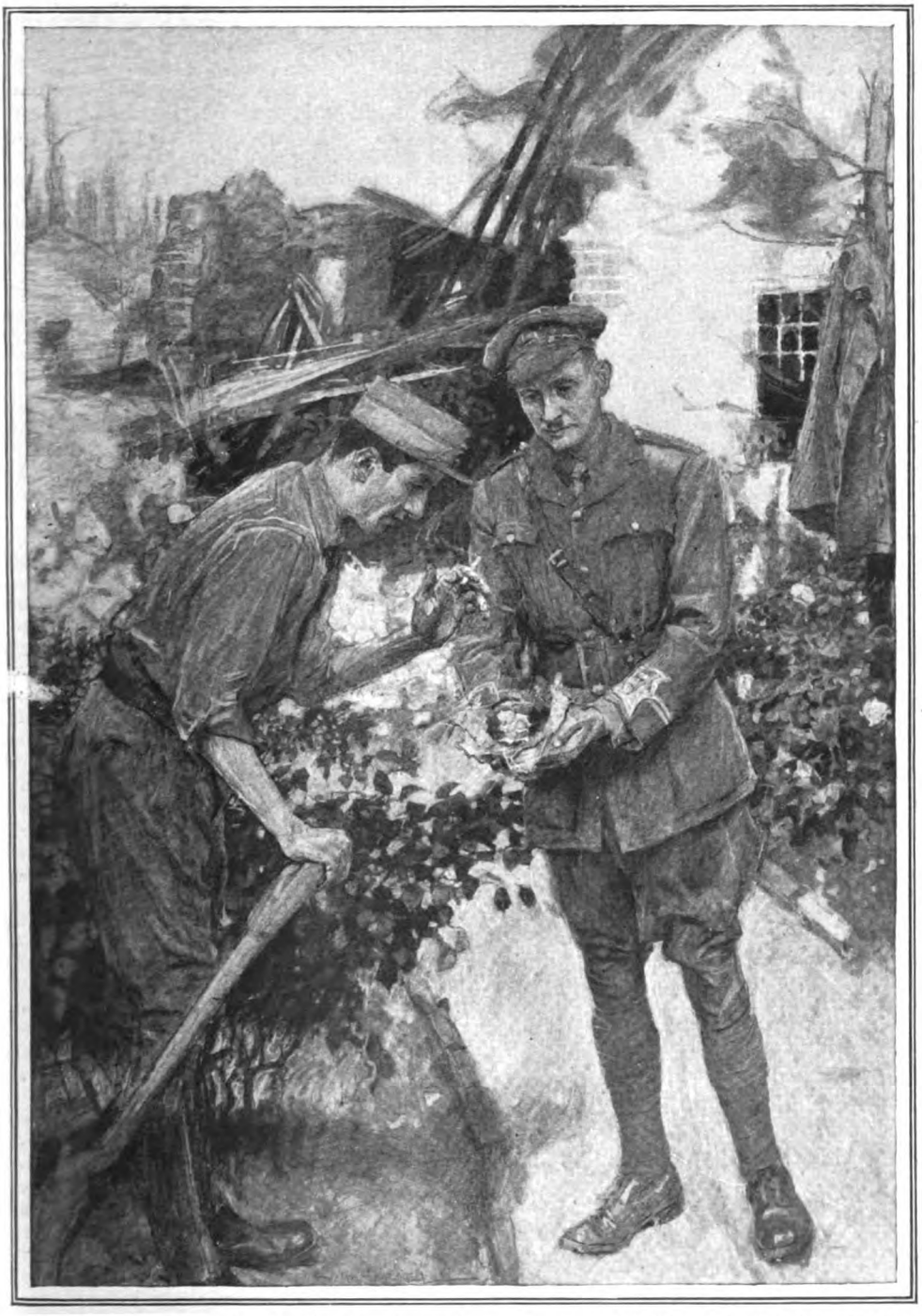
"But look at the flesh of these petals!" protested Norman. "And what a vigorous grower—there is enough stem here to convince you of that."

Now the one fault of "Madame Leonie," if that lovely creature could be said to have a fault, was a certain lack of vigorous habit. Even Doumic had admitted and deplored this. And the stout green shoot in his hands declared that on this point, at least, "Juliet" had the better of it. It was a really bitter moment for him. "Leonie," who had grown to rosehood under his own care, whom he had preferred to hundreds of competing beauties and taken to his soul: "Leonie," whom he had installed at his villa in the country, on whom he had lavished all the care and attention of which his ardent nature was capable—"Leonie" had failed him. And he saw quite clearly that "Juliet Hole" would take her place, that "Leonie" would have to be turned out, and that "Juliet" must, by right, become the mistress of his heart and garden. Poor "Leonie," whom he had loved so tenderly! And hiding his emotion, he said in a voice that choked a little: "Yes, you are right, my friend. Your 'Juliet' is the better. You have convinced me—I shall grow 'Juliet' in future."

Norman could not fail to appreciate the generosity of this reply: he knew what his feelings would have been had "Juliet" been outclassed. He observed and respected his friend's emotion, and was about to make some remark which would divert Doumic's thoughts to some less painful subject when a sudden flurry of firing recalled them to reality. Doumic dropped his spade, Norman replaced "Juliet" carefully in his pocket, and they set off. But before they regained the line, all the noise had died down. It was one of those false alarms which arose no one knew how, when both sides were thoroughly convinced by some incident that the other was about to spring an attack. But it was resolved to teach Fritz a lesson that very night. A poilu, familiar with that part of the country, had discovered a practicable path over the marsh. A very pretty raid was organized, in which French and English were to collaborate. Norman and Doumic were both employed in it.

THE pathway was uncertain and difficult to follow in the dark, and as the men filed out in silence the slight fog which always rose from the marsh at this season began to thicken round them. Half-way over it became impenetrable, but their guide knew his way and in due course they reached firm ground and delivered their attack, according to plan. A length of German trench was thoroughly cleaned up with little loss, and a large batch of astonished Germans was marched off to captivity. But the return was not so easy. Men got separated and the Germans remanned their trench and fired indiscriminately into the fog, which was now thicker than ever. Norman, uncertain whether his men had all returned and the casualties been brought back, lingered nervously till he thought all must be clear. But when he started to return in the darkness and blind fog he found that he had lost the path. To call out would be to attract the enemy's fire, and there was nothing for it but to persevere in silent attempts to find his way. In this he failed completely, and finally he resolved to seek a dry spot away from the edge of the bog and wait there till the departure of the mist or the return of daylight enabled him to make a dash for safety. He had not taken many steps before a shadowy figure appeared in his path and he found himself confronting a revolver. It was Doumic, in a similar plight.

Doumic was resolved to return at once. He explained that, by skirting the marsh to the left, they would reach dry ground and be able to crawl across no-man's land to the French line. He was also positive



He was not disappointed with the impression made upon his friend by "Juliet Hole" when he carefully unwrapped her and disclosed the glowing beauty to the other's sceptical eye.

that by taking a short cut inland, where the German line curved inwards, they would save time by avoiding a bend in the marsh. Norman's native caution made him a little dubious, but the other was convincing, and they set off. After groping about for half an hour they were forced to give it up, more hopelessly astray than before, and crawling under a bush they prepared to wait for dawn. Both thoroughly exhausted, they fell fast asleep.

A THIN fog was still there when they awoke at dawn, and an officer in German uniform was standing over them, with Doumic's revolver in his hand. "Good morning, gentlemen," he said, politely. "You will perceive that you are my prisoners."

Doumic cursed fluently in French, while Norman remembered that he had lost his own revolver in the attack.

"Any resistance would be foolish," went on their captor, "because the slightest disturbance here would bring up my people."

But Doumic had suddenly ceased swearing. Half-risen, he paused on one knee and pointing behind the German gasped, "Madame Leonie!" Norman followed his glance and saw a neat little bed of rose bushes carefully tended, and among them in full bloom one which had excited his friend. It was a "Madame Leonie," there could be no doubt. Another glance showed him that they were in a hollow surrounded by a little thicket, in the centre of which was a clearing. The middle of the clearing was occupied by this miniature rose garden.

"You are acquainted with Madame, then?" asked the officer with some surprise. He looked at Doumic with interest on his pale, tanned, heavily-wrinkled face.

"Acquainted?" snorted Doumic. "Acquainted with my own rose?"

Something like reverence crept into his questioner's expression.

"It is not possible! I am speaking to Monsieur Doumic?" he exclaimed.

"You are, unfortunately," returned Doumic dryly.

"But I am enchanted," cried the other; "enchanted to be honoured to meet the creator of the greatest rose in the world!"

"It seems, then, that in one thing one agrees with a German!" was Doumic's reply. "We are your prisoners, sir, and that is a misfortune that cannot be helped. But will you have the courtesy to permit my friend and myself to examine this rose and settle a little argument, before conducting us to your cage?"

"By all means," returned their captor, "if you give your word not to attempt an escape."

"There is no help for that," said Doumic, and the other was satisfied.

"I, too, am a grower of roses," he explained, "and these are from my garden at Deventer. Here we have been stationed for some time, and I could not resist the pleasure of having some of my favourites beside me."

"Deventer? Why Deventer?" interrupted Doumic, looking fixedly at the other's heavily-lined countenance. "Deventer—that is in Gelderland, and Gelderland is a province of Holland."

For a moment the man in German uniform looked disconcerted. Then he laughed ruefully, and with an expressive gesture of the hands replied:—

"A province of Holland is quite a suitable place of residence for a Dutchman. At any rate, I am the first to grow 'Madame Leonie' out of France, her birthplace."

"Then," said Doumic, "you are Pieter van Paulus."

Paulus bowed in assent. "And you ask what I am doing in this uniform? Well, we shall have hardly time to go deeply into problems of psychology. How shall I put it briefly? For generations my family on one side have been famous as gardeners—tulips, roses, roses, tulips; on the other, they have been fighters. A Paulus sailed with Van Tromp, another with De Ruyter. A Paulus helped in the sack of Gravesend on the Thames. One went to Moscow with Napoleon, another fought against him at Waterloo. It has always been so—one boy stopped at home in the gardens, another went out into the world as a soldier of fortune. But I was an only son and I am the last of the race, and in me both sides are present. I love my roses, I live among them happily for a time—and then some call of the wild, old blood prevails and I go out to find adventure. I have fought in the Balkans, I have fought in South America. And when we were mobilized in Holland and told to stand along the frontier looking on—it was too much for me. I slipped away, and through some old friends at Heidelberg, where I was a student, the rest was easy."

"If you must be a mercenary, you might have chosen another coat," growled Doumic.

Paulus cut him short. "I am no mercenary, Monsieur Doumic. I am a volunteer. It is not France or England that I fight—it is boredom. It is the tattered flag of adventure that I follow. All men are a little mad—this is my form of madness!"

"Yet you cannot be altogether lost since you love roses," said Doumic. "There is more than one path of adventure——"

Paulus wished to hear no more of the subject. "Your friend?" he queried, indicating the Englishman, who had kept silence.

"Is Lieutenant Norman Drew——"

"Who is the chief amateur of 'Juliet Hole'? Of course! His name is familiar to all growers." And turning to Norman, Paulus expressed his pleasure at meeting him. "But the famous 'Juliet' I have never seen," he added.

"Allow me to introduce her," said Norman, gravely, and produced the carefully-wrapped spray from his pocket. It was still fresh enough to enable the Dutchman to perceive at a glance the wonderful qualities of "Juliet Hole."

"Marvellous!" he exclaimed, and Norman blushed with pleasure. "But let us compare her with 'Madame Leonie'!"

"That was precisely our intention," said Doumic, and the three, forgetting entirely their situation, moved across to the rose-bed and, bending over "Madame Leonie's" golden splendour, became engrossed in the technicalities of rose-growing. Long and earnest was the discussion that followed. Every aspect of the matter was considered, and insensibly Doumic and Norman in turn appealed to Paulus as an impartial judge to decide their points of difference, till at his request they sat down on the grass while he summed up the case for either rose, and finally pronounced that there was nothing to choose between them in point of general excellence. This did not altogether please either Doumic or Norman, both of whom in consequence classed Paulus as a sound enough expert, but lacking in point of imagination and appreciation of the truly beautiful.

THEY fell silent, and in a few moments recollection of their actual circumstances came to all three and filled the silence with embarrassment. Their captor broke it blunderingly, looking at Doumic.

"Your people here are as happy as circumstances will permit, Monsieur Doumic. There have been no—no incidents in my district."

Doumic made a stiff inclination. Paulus went on in a burst of sentimentalism. "My friends, my friends, how terrible it is that we meet in this way, we who might have been so happy together among our roses!"

Neither responded.

"I, half adventurer, half honest Dutch burgher; you a manufacturer of Paris, and you an estate agent in London—your professions are familiar to me, for I read all that is published about roses; we meet here, and find we have two things at least in common: our love of roses—and the will to kill one another! Is this the world-purpose?"

But Doumic, who dreaded this sort of thing, stretched himself and yawned.

"For me," he exclaimed, "I have an appetite!"

Paulus took the hint and got upon his feet. The others followed his example. For a moment he hesitated, and then, turning to Norman, asked: "May I keep this bloom—as a souvenir?"

Norman looked astonished. "Oh, certainly!"

"Then, gentlemen, it is time for us to part."

"What do you mean?" snapped Doumic, suspiciously. "We are your prisoners. And probably we have been seen already by your people."

Paulus smiled and shook his head. "These bushes remain here to shelter our snipers—it was supposed that the marsh could not be crossed. We have not been seen yet. And I have been asleep. It was only in a dream that I could have imagined that Doumic, Drew, and Paulus met at such a time and in such a place to discuss the culture of roses. It was in a dream that I saw my two friends step into those bushes on the left and crawl down the ditch which leads to the edge of the marsh, where they lay till dusk, when it might be possible for them to cross."

Doumic came to the salute. "Monsieur," he said, "you behave handsomely."

Norman stammered his thanks.

Paulus smiled again, this time a little sadly. "All for the sake of these two ladies, 'Madame Leonie' and 'Miss Juliet'—and our pleasant little talk—and memories it brought." He looked from the rose in his hand to the rose on the bush. "An English rose—a French rose—a Dutch rose—what matters the label we give to beauty? One may see it in a rose—one may see it in a flag that goes to war. You will not understand that. We mad mortals make a world unfit for roses. But in spite of us a rose of peace will bloom some day."

At dusk that evening Doumic and Norman, given up for dead or captured, were joyfully dragged into the English trench, after a narrow escape from death at the hands of vigilant sentries. Of their adventure they had little to tell save that they had got lost in the fog, nearly walked into the German lines, and hidden in a thicket all day. Shortly after this affair both were removed to other parts of the line, and they saw no more of each other till the Armistice.

DURING the summer following that event, Norman obtained his discharge and resolved to go to Paris on his way home, and run out to Fontainebleau to visit his old friend Doumic. It was a glorious evening at the end of June when

he inquired a little anxiously at the door of Doumic's villa, and heard to his immense joy that Monsieur was in the garden. Yes, Monsieur was well—as well as could be expected. And a moment later Norman saw his friend limping about a magnificent bed of "Madame Leonie," so intent that he did not perceive the other's approach. Then with a cry of joy he embraced the Englishman, and the two were soon seated over a bottle of wine in the little summer-house, deep in talk of their adventures. It was Norman who said at last, breaking a momentary silence, "Do you remember Paulus?"

Doumic brought his fist down with a crash on the table.

"Do I remember Paulus? I should think so! I hate the fellow, my friend, precisely because I cannot help remembering that I liked him. It is impossible for me to like a man who fought against France—and yet this Paulus had not the immorality of an enemy of France. He was of the old breed of adventurers—it was Adventure who was the mistress of his soul, the mistress who lures all men whose souls are not dead. Let us acknowledge that."

Doumic came to the salute. "Monsieur," he said, "you
"All for the sake of 'Madame Leonie'

"I have a fancy to go and see that confounded little garden of his again," said Norman, absently.

"That is fortunate," cried Doumic, "for you are invited!"

"Invited? By Paulus?"

"Yes, by Paulus—through the agency of his widow."

"He is dead, then?"

"Yes. And I am sorry." And Doumic told how he had had a letter from the widow of Paulus, telling that her husband had died three months ago from the effects of a wound, and giving a message dictated by him when it was evident that his case was hopeless. It was that he, Paulus, had, from the blossom of "Juliet Hole" which Norman had given him, tried an experiment in cross-fertilization with "Madame Leonie" which promised success. But one could not tell to what result it had led till the new bush had bloomed. The outcome of his experiment he was doomed not to see, but if it had been left undisturbed it should undoubtedly bloom that summer. He was dying: but he implored Doumic to go and rescue the

behave handsomely." Norman stammered his thanks. and 'Miss Juliet,'" answered Paulus.

new rose, if it survived, and rear it if worthy in his judgment, dividing the stock with the Englishman, Norman Drew, in memory of a happy conversation. And Doumic would have gone, but it was difficult for him in his crippled state to undertake the journey alone, and he was fearful of letting another see this new flower or of incurring ridicule by asking anyone to undertake such a wild-goose project. "But now," he cried, "it is simple. If you will come with me, we shall start to-morrow!"

Norman readily agreed, and the following morning they set off in a car. A day later, without much difficulty, they found the spot. Trembling with excitement which both felt to be foolish, they ascended the slope towards the thicket, Doumic cursing the lameness which impeded their progress. The thicket was before them. But what had happened? Half of it was a blackened heap. A shell had fallen there and flung the bushes right and left and set fire to them. Those that still had roots were torn and broken. Choking with disappointment, they forced a way through the *débris*.

And there before them, in the one spot left untouched of the little garden, they saw the most wonderful rose that ever bloomed, a marvel of pink and gold, exquisite in shape — the rose about which the whole world talks still with enthusiasm. They stood in silence beside it.

Then Doumic sighed. "There is a better rose than 'Madame Leonie'!" he said, in awe-stricken tones.

And Norman repeated: "There is a better rose than 'Juliet Hole'!"

And they looked at one another suddenly.

"What is the name of this rose?" demanded the Englishman, rather fiercely.

"Le Volontaire!" said Doumic, with conviction. And they took off their hats.

# WHEN I WAS YOUNG

A SERIES of ARTICLES by CELEBRITIES of TO-DAY describing HOW THEY VIEWED LIFE IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

## No. XI

## CAPTAIN E.R.G.R. EVANS C.B., D.S.O., R.N.

Photo: Swaine.

Captain Evans, who is so well known as one of the brave band of heroes who went in search of Captain Scott, is one of the great adventurers of our time. This article shows, emphatically, how in his case the child was father to the man.

MY views on life have always been that it is a dull business unless you make it exciting, and adventure has to be looked for.

Most of my early days were spent being naughty and adventurous, for as far back as I can remember I have been a really naughty boy and a bit of an adventurer. I can remember at the age of four calling my nurse a dreadful name, which made her burst into tears and run to my mother. I was then locked in the night nursery until my father came home, when I was *sent for*. The nurse, my sister, elder and younger brothers, and my mother and father received me in the dining-room, where my father gave me a beating. The nurse cried, my mother cried, and so did my sister and brothers—but the nurse cried most of all. My parents couldn't stop the nurse crying, and between her sobs she kept on saying: "Poor little darling." She was a dear girl, and the first beating I received hurt her more than it hurt me. The next evil action came about through reading "Robinson Crusoe," or rather through looking at the pictures. I suggested to my brothers that we should make a raft.

We looked about for a sea, and since it was a quiet afternoon, my people away, and the maids upstairs, resting or adorning

**The illustration from "Robinson Crusoe" which suggested the prank described by Captain Evans on this page.**

themselves, we stopped up the drain from the area, flooded the latter from the sink taps by means of flexible gas piping, and then carried out the kitchen table and had our raft afloat—but we forgot to turn off the taps, and this resulted in the kitchen and basement being flooded with some inches of water. When the cook came downstairs she wept copiously, and, to make matters worse, when the flood was at its height my father and mother returned unexpectedly and caught us. My parents saw the humour of the situation, but there was a good deal of damage done and the cook gave notice because "the children were so troublesome."

Then came the desire for adventure farther afield. We boys commenced fighting in the streets. We were generally victorious, but not always. My young brother got some of his front teeth knocked out by a stone, and we frequently came home with bleeding noses and bloodstained clothes.

The fight I best remember occurred in Hampstead. My two brothers and myself found two other boys fishing in the Leg of Mutton Pond, and my young brother commenced throwing stones near the float they were using. The elder boy, whose name turned out to be Tom, rushed at my young brother, and I rushed at him and asked him to fight. He said he didn't want to fight me as I hadn't interfered with his fishing, whereat I pointed out that he couldn't fight my young brother, who was much smaller.

In the end we became so objectionable that the boys packed up their fishing and went home. But they were strategists; they led us into an ambush, and we suddenly found ourselves outside a Board School being mobbed by fifteen or twenty boys.

Fortunately a brewer's dray, with three burly carters, was close by. The draymen, with a strong British sense of fair play, intervened, and hearing my explanation they made a ring and Tom and I fought it out.

It was a great fight. Tom was a taller boy, but I was very strong for my size, and in the end he gave in.

Shortly after this, for no reason but love of finding what lay in the Great Beyond, my brothers and I commenced to run away from home. We ran away three times, spent one night at Barking police station, one at High Barnet—where we were allowed to sit on the police horses in the stables whilst waiting to be fetched—and one night at

**The draymen, with a strong British sense of fair play, intervened.**

Brentford Workhouse, in the Casual Ward, with the tramps.

My father, a hard-working barrister, had to do something drastic because my elder brother and I were expelled from the Merchant Taylors' School for constantly playing truant, and incidentally for fighting for pennies in the Meat Market.

I was very rightly adjudged to be the ringleader, and I was then sent to a school for troublesome boys. It was a wonderful place on Kenley Downs. When I went there I was the youngest in the school, and, consequently, rather petted by boys and masters alike. I was very strong indeed for my size, a good climber, and I was often employed climbing trees and robbing orchards for the bigger boys and myself.

Captain Evans at the age of two.

I was well beaten here, but I actually made my first contract at this school. I contracted with the head master that he could beat me as much as he liked provided he did not tell my mother of the "apple-stealing episodes"—for I was caught. He certainly played the game. After a year I came away with a good report and a hedgehog in my bag, and thereafter I went to a school nearer home. Here I continued to be a bad boy, although I always won my term prizes—I have them now—beautifully bound books with "Warwick House School" emblazoned on their covers: Southey's "Life of Nelson," "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson, "Tom Brown's Schooldays," etc.

My worst escapade was brought about by my purchasing a three-and-sixpenny revolver at a second-hand shop in Edgware Road. I bought ammunition, too, and used it, although I was only twelve. One day a boy named Montefiore produced a chameleon which I coveted. I had my revolver in my pocket, and as he would not hand over the chameleon I threatened to shoot him. Of course he couldn't stand looking down the barrel of my revolver, and the little chameleon changed hands. However, Montefiore told his father, who very promptly reported the matter to the head master. I was *sent for* (I was always being *sent for*) and caught with a loaded revolver in my trousers pocket. I was thoroughly well caned for this, but not expelled. Being sent for again next day I had a long talk with the head master, of whom I was very fond.

He told me a good many home truths and I gave him my views too, but he said in effect: "Look here, Evans Minor, we like you in this school and we don't want to expel you. You are always top of your class, but you don't work and you set a bad example. If, instead of expelling you, I make you a prefect, will you promise to look after the other boys and stop being a pirate, for that is what you are?" I had been expelled once, and wanted no repetition, so I readily fell in with his views, and returned to my class as one of the five school prefects.

A year or so later I was sent to the *Worcester* training ship, where I was always in trouble over escapades such as swimming across the Thames at Purfleet, or going for midnight boating trips, but I did manage somehow or other to win a naval cadetship, and then I became the despair of every Commander I served with.

Before leaving the *Worcester* I learnt to be quite expert in handling and sailing small boats; indeed, I was so fond of making boat expeditions that my father felt far easier in his mind when my brothers and myself were afloat than when we were "adventuring" ashore.

AT Looe, on the Cornish coast, we three boys, during the summer holidays, were allowed unlimited freedom. We hired a little sea-worn cockleshell of a boat which rejoiced in the name of the *Lively Polly*. She was cheaply acquired; for we paid only half a crown a week to the fisherman owner, a man named Pearn, and in the *Lively Polly* we had one or two real adventures. One day I learnt that another *Worcester* cadet had arrived at Downderry, a coast village some five miles to the eastward of Looe, and I decided to visit him. An August gale was blowing that day and no boats were out; the large luggers had

all come in to Looe Harbour, and the fishermen in their blue jerseys and fish-scaled sea-boots loafed and lounged in an open space at the shore end of the little stone breakwater pier. Seeing us "outward bound" and under sail one or two became uneasy, and the boat owner, Pearn, hailed us. We waved at him and he shouted, "Keep well in the shelter of the island!" Looe Island protects the bay from westerly gales, and provided we followed his instructions we were really in no danger. The waves grew bigger and bigger as we worked our way seaward, and then, when clear of every rocky ledge to leeward, we set course for Downderry, brought the sea astern, and were soon bounding along at a speed of perhaps eight knots, which was considerable for a diminutive craft like the *Lively Polly*. Quite unafraid, we laughed at the breaking waves and in sheer delight watched the crested "white horses" pursuing us. We quickly drew away from the shelter afforded by Looe Island and were soon driving before a fresh gale. However, one wave broke and turned all our pleasure into fear—it flooded the *Lively Polly* and we had to bail. My brothers were quite content to let me take charge, and I told them to get down into the bottom of the boat and keep still when not bailing, and then I realized that I must get the speed off the *Lively Polly*, for she was now so lively that her little rudder would hardly steer her. Very cleverly my two brothers "shortened sail"—but even taking in that little rag made the boat manageable once more.

We now got oars out, my brothers pulling whilst I unshipped the rudder and got out the third oar to steer by. With this I kept the boat well under control and managed to turn safely and head the *Lively Polly* homeward, and into the sea; a very few minutes of pulling told me that we could never reach Looe. I changed places with one brother and pulled my hardest, but we were rapidly drifting to the east-north-east and closing the coast. We could now see Downderry village, but between the shore and ourselves was a long white line of breakers. I had already visited the place once or twice and I knew we could land on a fairly flat beach there, whereas if we allowed ourselves to drift farther eastward we should perhaps be thrown on to the rocks on a dead lee shore. So we stopped pulling to windward, headed for Downderry beach, and taking it easy closed the shore. It didn't look very inviting, but the coast-guards had seen us and a little crowd was collected on the beach from whom we knew we could expect assistance—they are good folk in those parts. The seas were bad, but the bottom shoaled gradually and we handled our boat well enough to close the shore without accident, my two brothers now pulling whilst I worked the steer oar. Having explained to them that we would land on the back of a wave and pull our hardest just after it had broken, and then all three jump out as we touched the beach, we proceeded to put our plan into execution.

We were certainly lucky, and the *Lively Polly* behaved splendidly. We got fairly close to the beach, and then as a big wave rolled up astern I gave the signal to pull—"not too hard at first." The wave just passed us and then we pulled like hell. Up we went; the steer oar was holding the boat's head as required and, the wave breaking and running in a frothy mass high up the beach, we followed, driving the *Lively Polly* with good hard strokes until we touched bottom, when out we all leapt and dragged our boat beyond reach of the breakers. Several fishermen and visitors lent us a hand, but although we were only thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, we took it very nonchalantly and, espying "Froggy" Phillips, my *Worcester* cadet friend, I said, "Hullo, Froggy! We thought we'd come over and call on you." Everybody laughed at this, and "Froggy" Phillips took us home to lunch. We then walked back to Looe and on the way decided to say nothing of our adventure, except that we would tell Pearn that his boat was all right and that we would fetch her back when the weather moderated.

At the age of eight.

My people knew nothing of this "day out" until several weeks later.

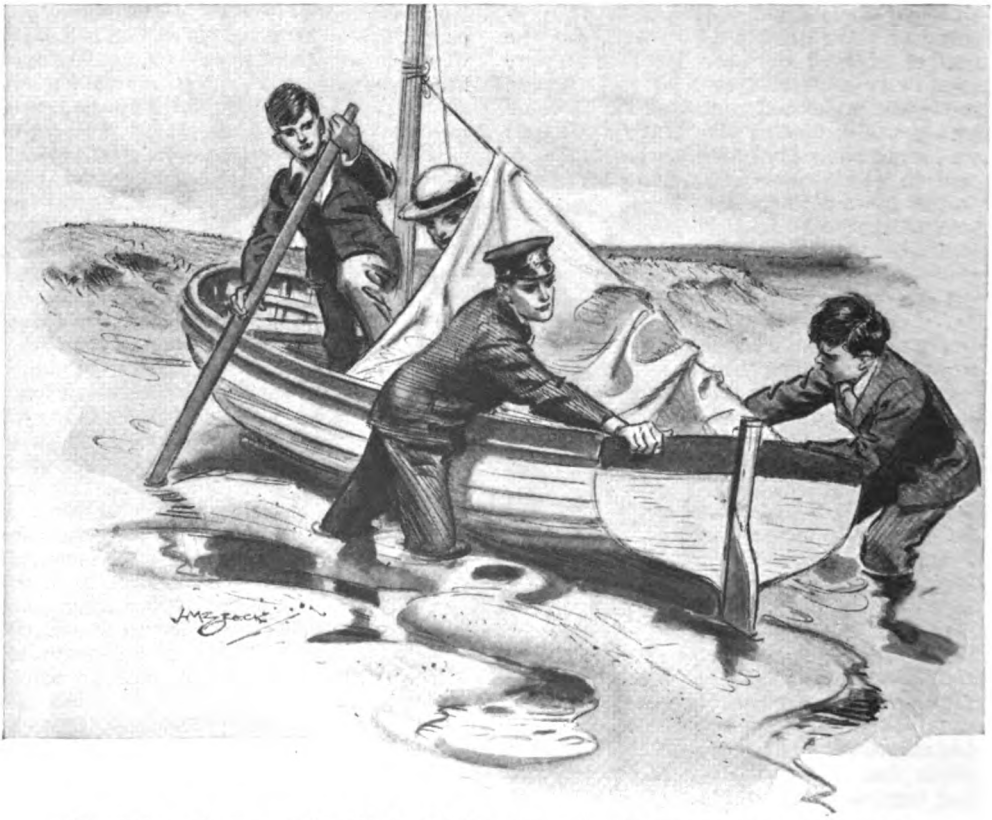
NEXT Easter we boys were taken by my mother to Ramsgate, and then we planned an expedition to the Sandwich River, which promised adventure in plenty—we never could content ourselves with taking a boat for an hour and pulling about like ordinary trippers. This time we engaged a boat from old Stephen Penny, a lugger owner and a famous lifeboat man. We took

with us a passenger in the shape of my mother, who had a greater confidence in her boys as seamen and navigators than was justified, for she experienced her first "shipwreck" at our hands. We embarked a sufficiency of provisions, then pulled and sailed to Pegwell Bay, so famous for its shrimps, and thence to the Sandwich River. Navigating its lower reaches on the last of the flood tide was easy enough, but we had to find a creek where we could have our picnic lunch, and we very indiscreetly ran our boat into a *cul-de-sac*. We pulled her into what we considered a snug little harbour, and then, as it commenced to rain, we rigged an awning over the boat out of a sail and had our meal.

We so enjoyed this picnic meal, with appetites whetted by the sea air, that none of us noticed that the tide had commenced to fall, and when we prepared to get our little craft under way again she was comfortably bedded in soft mud. In vain we tried to move her. We boys sank first knee deep into the mud and then "squelch, spatter, plonk," and we were thigh deep in the stuff. We regained the refuge of our boat and held council.

I need hardly say we covered my mother in black, slimy mud, which was unavoidable in the little boat, but she entered into the fun and the humour of our predicament. Our council resulted in two of us leaving on an expedition to seek aid whilst my younger brother remained in the boat with my mother. Rain was now falling steadily—the mud and the rain mixed in the boat, and everything was "squelchy," besides which we were all wet through.

By means of the boat's bottom boards and oars, we two elder brothers eventually reached some isolated houses, and then, accompanied by a kind old woman, we sought out and found the coastguards. In those days we really had an efficient coastguard service, who watched and saw everything. These men were already getting ready a "relief expedition." They came back with stout planks and got my mother safely ashore, and promised to refloat and take charge of our little boat at the next high water. My own sense of shame at



Our little craft was comfortably bedded in soft mud. In vain we tried to move her.

wrecking the party kept me near at hand, but my mother and young brother drove home *viâ* Pegwell Bay in what was then known as a "fly"—a sort of glorified one-horse cab. My elder brother and I spent a miserable evening watching the mud flats and hoping nobody would interfere with our hired boat, but at eleven o'clock that night the kind old woman sent her husband after us, took us into her cottage and gave us tea and eggs, lent us some old flannel shirts, then put us to bed while she dried our clothes. My *Worcester* uniform was ruined by that muddy adventure, likewise my brother's clothes, but we forgot all our troubles next morn when a brawny and cheerful coastguard came to the cottage and said our boat had been salved, and that if we hurried up a small steam-tug going to Ramsgate would give us a tow.

As a naval cadet.

We bade our old benefactress farewell, gave her what money we had, and were soon proudly sitting in the stern sheets of our boat—which the coastguards had even cleaned out—*en route* for Ramsgate, home, and the expected jeers of old Stephen Penny, lugger captain and boat owner.

The two foregoing episodes are typical of how I spent my days—when I was young. There wasn't much adventure for boys who were the sons of people of very moderate means, unless they looked for it.

About the age of fifteen I gave up being naughty, because I found I hurt the feelings of those responsible for my welfare, but still I sought out thrills and adventures, and I only read books of adventure and sea fighting. My heroes were the old Arctic explorers and Nansen, who had just come home from the frozen North. I knew all about Columbus, but thought he was a bad leader. I had a great admiration for Captain James Cook, and knew far more than most boys about the early seamen, explorers, buccaneers, privateers, smugglers, and slavers.

We played at pirates ourselves a bit, and used to sing :—

> *"My name is Captain Kid.*
> *God's laws I did forbid,*
> *And wickedly I did,*
> *As I sailed . . ." etc.*

In the *Worcester* I won the five-guinea prize presented by Lord Brassey for the best Naval Essay, and I spent every cent of it "mucking about" in small boats sailing up creeks, rivers, and finding out little fishing harbours. We three boys were all good swimmers, and the sea was generally very kind to us.

Once I had entered the Royal Navy I had plenty of boat work in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, but I didn't get much freedom as a naval cadet and midshipman, since the gun-rooms of 1897 and the years when I was a "snotty" were the strictest autocracies in the world. I was beaten into obedience in my first ship, and sometimes beaten for sport.

I found a hardy friend in another boy called Eustace Ring, and we two developed a fondness for walking tours. We used to walk miles and miles, and see many things that nobody else in the ship did. We visited far-distant Turkish villages and occasionally got into trouble for plundering orange groves, but always escaped without injury to ourselves or our pockets owing to fleetness of foot and to the wonderful state of physical fitness in which we kept ourselves. Ring and I thought nothing of going away in a skiff and pulling all day round some isolated coast. We got caught in squalls and bad weather occasionally, but were never defeated by the elements, and we always brought our boat back undamaged.

THE walks we took I look back upon even nowadays with pride. Ring and I once walked from Weymouth to Salisbury on a fine September night. At Blandford, about half-way on the journey, we had a midnight supper of beer, bread and cheese, and pickled onions. The landlord of the inn himself served us, his folk having all gone away to a fair. Right well did he look after us, whilst we entertained him with naughty stories and tales of the sea. He took a shilling each for the meal, and gave us back more than that when he learnt that we intended to walk right on to Salisbury, for he said he didn't know how we could keep going for so long, and he presented us with a small flask of whisky. We needed it before reaching our destination, as we were quite "cooked" when we staggered into "Sarum."

Both Ring and I looked for adventure on

"The Broad Highway," although none of our experiences was ever quite as exciting as those of Jeffery Farnol's hero Peter Vibart —but we learned to know a variety of our fellow-creatures, for we met labourers, gipsies, farmers, and tinkers, Irish colleens, and bagmen by the score, since Ring and I walked not only "The Broad Highway," but cross country, up mountains (such as we met with), along river bank and canal. We spent most of our leave together, and Ring's mother and father used to call me their sixth son, rejoicing in my petty successes in sport and so forth, and sympathizing with me when I encountered defeat, and that was fairly often! Our lives were full of promise in those days. We were appointed to the cruiser *Hawke*, to the battleship *Repulse*, and to a toy man-of-war called the *Dolphin* together. We two boys never had any sort of quarrel, we shared our money and our clothes, until the sad day came for Eustace Ring to be appointed to a ship in China, when I was compelled to seek adventure alone. Little did we both dream that our happy days in company were for ever finished on the day I bade him farewell. Poor Ring developed consumption in the Far East, whilst I was lucky enough to be selected when still an acting sub-lieutenant for service with the National Antarctic Relief Expedition.

When I returned with a host of adventure memories to recount, I had to sit at my friend's bedside in Nayland Sanatorium, near Colchester, and a few weeks later I walked with his father and mother and one of his brothers behind his coffin to the grave.

I never again met with anyone who so fitted in with my simple ideas of adventure and ambition. We had both longed to visit the icy vastnesses of the frozen North, but it was not until I had already made four voyages to the Antarctic and lived through many a real and unlooked-for adventure that I found my way across the Arctic Circle on what was feather-bed work compared to some of the expeditions I had made.

I have still something left of the views on life which I held when I was young. I still look for and love adventure when it comes, and whether I am dancing at Claridge's or entertaining Norwegian peasant folk in the lonely, snow-clad mountains of the Northland, I think I enjoy life to the full—perhaps because I am still young, whatever my acquaintances may think about it!

Sub-Lieutenant Evans (second figure from the left) off to the South Pole when twenty years old.

A NEW STORY OF THE FIVE TOWNS

# DEATH, FIRE, AND LIFE

By

# ARNOLD BENNETT

*ILLUSTRATED BY C.E. BROCK, R.I.*

I.

MR. CURTENTY lay in bed in the winter morning darkness, and reflected upon the horrible injustice of destiny. Mr. Curtenty was a most respectable gentleman—indeed, a connection of the celebrated Jos Curtenty of Longshaw, and, be it admitted, a great deal more dignified than Jos ever was. He had never done anything wrong; his conscience was sinless. In sixty years his dignity and his respectability had not been even compromised. He could, and he did, look everybody unyieldingly in the face. By nature and long practice he was intensely proud and independent. All the world addressed him as "Mr." Once he had lost a situation through his employer omitting the "Mr." Of course he had not openly resented the omission, for he was not a fool, but the omission had put him in a frame of mind favourable to quarrelling, and a quarrel about some trifle had ensued. Nevertheless he had soon obtained a new situation, which unhappily he had lost through the death of the new employer.

Since that disaster—now rather more than a year ago—he had been workless, and therefore wageless. Society seemed to blame him for being sixty years old. The fact that he had no particular trade also counted against him. He had always had posts such as watchman, doorkeeper, timekeeper, inspector—posts which meant doing nothing with dignity. Hence no doubt his feeling of superiority to people who actually did things.

Somehow he could scarce hide this feeling—even from his daughter's husband, who secretly resented it. Jim Crowther was a young miner living at Longshaw, and in the opinion of Mr. Curtenty, Jim's wife, Harriet, had married beneath her. Mr. Curtenty was mistaken in supposing that he had concealed this opinion from Jim and Harriet. Every week he disliked Jim and Harriet more and more, because they were contributing to his subsistence. They were not so crude in their methods of charity as to give him money direct. Certainly not. Such clumsiness would have made an everlasting breach between the two generations. Mr. Curtenty knew naught, officially, of any help. Only it invariably happened that when Mr. Curtenty had not a shilling, Mrs. Curtenty had ten shillings or so, which she produced as it were apologetically. Mr. Curtenty was diplomatic enough never to inquire whence she had obtained the money.

Thus the twelve lean months had run precariously and unsatisfactorily on.

But a crisis was now upon Mr. Curtenty. For his wife had told him that Harriet had told her that Jim had told Harriet that Mrs. Curtenty could go and live with the Crowthers at Longshaw if she liked, and Mr. Curtenty too. And little by little Mr. Curtenty was given to understand that either he must submit to this humiliation—or starve. Well, Mr. Curtenty had his pride, and he swore to himself that he would not submit to it. He simply could not imagine himself as a helpless pauper dependent in the home of his son-in-law. He conveyed his decision to Mrs. Curtenty, and the next thing he heard was that if he wouldn't go she would! Ah! He saw well enough that the notion was to force him into submission! As if anybody could force him into submission!

Two days previously, it being then a Wednesday, Mr. Curtenty had been informed

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that Mrs. Curtenty would migrate to Longshaw at the end of the week, Saturday. It was now Friday. The supreme catastrophe was indeed shaping. All his life Mr. Curtenty had worried about the future, and his relatives and acquaintances had laughed at him for worrying. But was he not justified by the event? Had he ever been wrong? They twitted him about being miserly. He was not miserly. He had always been careful, and was he not now justified of his carefulness also? Financially, there was the matter of the Post Office Savings Bank account. They did not positively accuse him of keeping a private hoard in the Post Office Savings Bank; but they hinted at it, and no amount of denials by him would stop their hints.

His ear caught a *puffpuff-puffpuff*, the same being the first irregular coughings of the engine of Clayhanger's Steam-Printing Works, which extended from Duck Bank down the opposite side of the lane. These coughings were Mr. Curtenty's morning clock—he had no other, nor watch either. Soon followed the sound of sirens from different parts of the town of Bursley. The hour was seven. Mr. Curtenty slid out of bed from his wife's side, and began with deliberation to dress. He did everything with deliberation. He even looked for work—when he looked for it—with deliberation. (But he had an idea that work ought to look for him.) His nature demanded that he should always have plenty of time in front of him. Time was the basis of dignity; hurry was the enemy of dignity. The first part of his dressing he did in the dark. Then he lit a candle, behind the bed's head, and with a morsel of blacking and an old stumpy brush he softly cleaned his boots—or such poor fragments of them as were left to clean.

A miserable small room, but the totality of Mr. Curtenty's home! Once he had rented a whole house, and could walk from one room to another and go upstairs and downstairs and still be at home. . . . A few pitiable bits of furniture, including the little oil-stove on which his wife cooked their so-called meals! Once she had held sway over a whole kitchen-range!

In a dignified way he was sorry for his young and ingenuous, quietly grumbling wife. Not really young, for she was the mother of a mother! But he, at thirty, had married her at nineteen, and to him she had always remained curiously young. There she lay, on the verge of fifty, and looking to the impartial observer more than her age—she had had a wearing life—but to him, in her tranquil, pathetic sleep, she seemed rather like a girl, foolish, feckless, helpless. Yes, he was sorry for her. . . . So she intended on the morrow to migrate to her daughter's at Longshaw, whether he went or not! Unless he yielded she meant to leave him—leave him to his own devices. It had come to that.

On the old tin tray was just enough bread, and dripping, and bits of cured fish to last them till the next morning. Thenceforward, the fiat had been issued from Longshaw, there were to be no more supplies. And then what? He knew that his wife was wondering, and Harriet was wondering, and Jim was wondering what the obstinate, secretive old man would do—what would happen. He alone knew what would happen.

WHEN he had laced his boots under the candle, and combed his hair, he extinguished the candle and finished his toilet in the dark. But the dark was now twilight; the earth was revolving as usual, and in its revolution baring Bursley to the dawn. Mr. Curtenty buttoned his greenish jacket, tied an antique woollen muffler round his collarless neck, put on his cap, and went forth into Woodisun Lane.

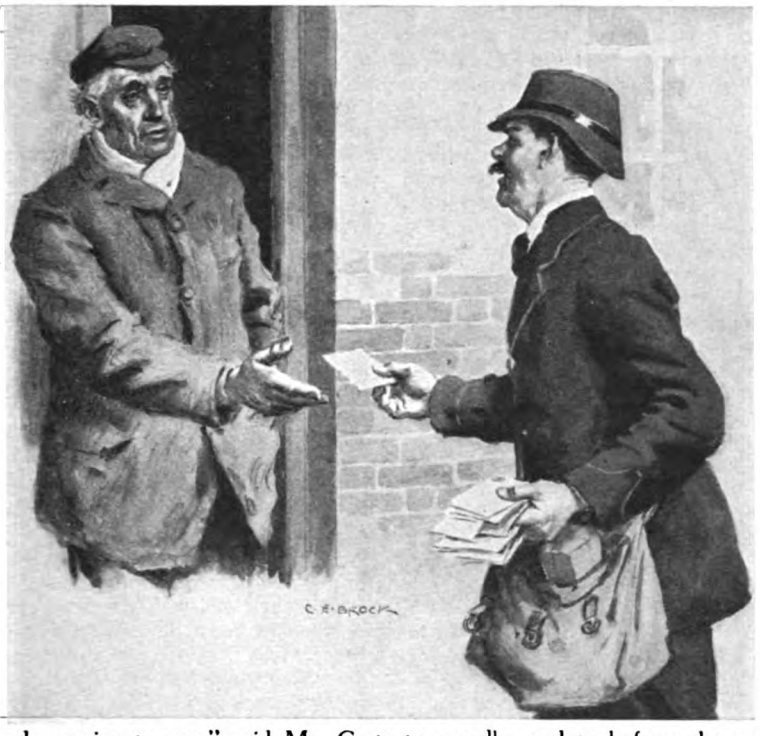
He knew he would be too early. He always was too early. He paced smartly but with dignity about Duck Square. A huge tram, packed with people who had work and were going off to do it, rumbled past the Wesleyan chapel down Duck Bank towards Hanbridge. Mr. Curtenty stamped his feet into the pavement and rubbed his hands, for January mornings are always dank and chill in the Five Towns. Yet while doing this he pretended with dignity not to feel the cold. At last he descried the postman, and returned to the front-door of the cottage in which he occupied one room; and he received the postman majestically on the doorstep.

"Good morning," said the genial postman.

"Good morning to you," said Mr. Curtenty grandly, and took from the postman a small blue official envelope.

In the privacy of the cottage stairs he opened the envelope. Its contents were quite in order: an authority to withdraw the sum of two shillings from the Savings Bank department of the Post Office. Then Mr. Curtenty drew from his breast-pocket a yellowish bank-book, which showed that twenty pounds stood to his credit, and he carefully put the withdrawal form within the book and replaced the book in his pocket.

Surely you are not surprised! A prudent man must have something up his sleeve for the last emergencies. Mr. Curtenty had maintained that twenty pounds in reserve throughout a year of privation and humiliation. He had lied about it for a year and more than a year. No matter how terrible




"Good morning to you," said Mr. Curtenty grandly, and took from the postman a small blue official envelope.

a plight you may be in, it is always possible to conceive yourself in a still worse plight. That twenty pounds was Mr. Curtenty's bulwark against the imaginable worse—the fear of which had plagued him for forty years. It was the last defence and resource of his independence.

"Where ye been?" asked his waking wife, as he re-entered their home.

"Getting a breath of air," said Mr. Curtenty.

II.

IN the evening, about half-past seven, Mrs. Curtenty was lying in bed (for warmth) and Mr. Curtenty was sitting on one of the two chairs, all in the dark, when Mr. Curtenty, after a little shuffling of his legs and scrunching of the chair legs on the bare boards, suddenly rose and felt his way to the door, where his cap and muffler hung on a hook. The pair had had two lean meals and one snack; all the fish was eaten, but not quite all the bread; some tea remained for breakfast. Mr. Curtenty had been abroad once, in the afternoon, and during that period he had cashed the warrant for two shillings. Whether or not his wife had gone out in the same interval he did not know. They had scarcely spoken to each other, not from unfriendliness, but from habit. Not a word had been said about the morrow, or Mr. Curtenty's intentions regarding the morrow. Mrs. Curtenty had not dared to challenge him on the great matter. Indeed, he could not safely be challenged.

Mrs. Curtenty thought to herself now, as she sometimes remarked to her daughter:—

"Things'll work themselves out if you leave 'em alone."

This was her philosophy in face of Mr. Curtenty's terrible estranging dignity and independence. All she said was, as Mr. Curtenty fumbled on the cheek of the door:—

"Where ye going?"

And all he replied was:—

"A breath of air."

He left without looking at the companion of his life. Even if he had looked at her he could not have seen her in the darkness. Still, he might have lit the last inch of candle for a few seconds and looked at her, for the moment was one of farewell after a companionship of thirty years. But his sentimental emotions had been numbed, frozen by misfortune, by spiritual pride, by privation, by secretiveness, by hidden anger against fate, and by self-righteousness. So he just went. He knew that his young wife would fall asleep and stay asleep.

It was a raw night in Woodisun Lane, and a muddy.

He had not meant to visit the Free Reference Library in the Wedgwood Institution, but as a measure of precaution he decided to do so. He was at home in that warm refuge of the unemployed, the Wedgwood Institution. The horrid, stuffy, damp smell of the Reference Library delighted his nose. After the usual formalities he obtained Quain's Dictionary of Medicine, and, taking the thick volume to a desk, he turned over its pages with the deliberate majesty of a vicar searching in the Bible for the lesson appointed to be read.

His brain was absolutely clear. He was not out of his mind, nor out of any part of his mind. In no circumstances would he migrate to his son-in-law's. His wife might go; she indeed would go; and she would be happy there, or at least contented. The twenty pounds (less two shillings) which he had guarded for an ultimate contingency would be useless to him, because too soon exhausted. He might of course fend for himself, all alone, for a time on the twenty pounds; but if he did so his family would know for sure that he had had a secret hoard after all, and he could not bear that revelation; it would too seriously humiliate him. Moreover, when the twenty pounds was gone—what then? Merely the same crucial, unanswerable problem as now! No! He had had enough, and there could be but one answer to the question, To be or not to be?

Quain was perfectly explicit: "The soluble cyanides, more especially the cyanide of potassium, largely used by photographers and by electro-platers, are common articles of commerce, and produce the same deadly results as the acid itself. The fatal dose of prussic acid is the equivalent of less than one grain of the anhydrous acid."

Nothing could be simpler to the understanding. He had read it before, but he wished to refresh his memory and so avoid the possibility of blunder. He refrained from proceeding to read about the effect of the poison; he had read that also before; it was rather disturbing, sensational.

He closed the stately tome and grandly handed it back across the counter to the pert young thing in a jersey who had dominion there. None could have guessed, as he calmly descended the broad steps of the Institution, that he was solemnly marked out and divided that night from every other soul in the town.

HE made his way to Critchlow's in St. Luke's Square. Critchlow was the oldest chemist in Bursley. He knew Critchlow slightly—a sardonic and antique being who would as lief as not sell poison to a customer who he guessed meant to drink it. Not that there was any trouble about buying poisons in those distant days at the end of the nineteenth century. You could pick a phial of tablets out of a mahogany case and pay for it and walk off with, for instance, as much sulphonal as would finish a whole family—and no question asked and no eyebrow lifted. And if perchance Critchlow should ask a question about "Scheele's Acid," the trade name of the anhydrous prussic, Mr. Curtenty (who had never heard of sulphonal) could easily refer to electro-plating; for he had once had a temporary job on a small electro-plating works in Knype; hence his knowledge of the matter.

Critchlow's, however, was closed. Monstrous that the shop should be closed on that night of all nights! Holl's clock across the Square showed six minutes to eight, and Critchlow's had no right to be closed until eight. But Critchlow's was closed. The old fellow was allowing himself to become a bit capricious in his latter years.

Mr. Curtenty had purposely driven the transaction as late as convenient, for he desired a deserted, nocturnal town for his mortal work; but he now saw the possibility of having cut the thing too fine. Still, there was Salter's, in the Market Place—all on the way to the empty playground, beyond the Town Hall, which he had selected for his end. He walked to the top of the Square, and turned to the right where the Market Place was. He had an idea that Salter's kept open till nine o'clock. Salter's was open, and he entered the shop, which happened to be empty, behind the counter as well as in front of it.

Salter's was the new chemistry in Bursley. Salter, a daring and optimistic fellow from Birmingham, had taken over the ramshackle old shop from the dying hand of the historic chemist who, for more than fifty years, had sold drugs and given advice to the old-fashioned *élite* of the ramshackle old town. Salter had provided a new ideal for the ramshackle old town. The interior of the shop had been expensively refurnished from floor to high ceiling. It shone; it glittered; it was orderly; it was the cleanest thing in Bursley; it had an antiseptic, tonic odour; its clock was accurate; it offered chairs, mirrors, and a weighing-machine for the use of customers. It displayed more tooth-brushes than a quarter of a century earlier had been employed in the whole of Bursley. Mr. Curtenty was not impressed. He had the native's distaste for and suspicion of all that was "showy" and that was not ramshackle.

A fine young gentleman, Mr. Salter

"I'll get you to sign the poison book."

himself (no apron), appeared from the dark backward of the establishment, glided along the length of the counter, and became a note of interrogation to Mr. Curtenty, whose tongue—very surprisingly—clave to his palate and whose throat grew parched.

"I want some Scheele's Acid."

Mr. Salter stared at Mr. Curtenty, and Mr. Curtenty, invigorated and challenged by the stare, returned it.

"Photographic work?"

Mr. Curtenty nodded. "Aye!"

"How much?"

"Dun' know. Smallish bottle."

"Half a pint?"

"Aye! That'll do."

"I'll get you to sign the poison book."

"Aye!"

Mr. Salter moved about behind the counter, and in a startlingly brief space of time was slapping a salmon-tinted poison label on a corked bottle. (Never within Mr. Curtenty's experience had seconds passed so quickly.) The next instant he had screwed the bottle into a bit of wrapping-paper, and he was in the act of handing it to Mr. Curtenty when a great lady entered the shop and Mr. Salter turned to her with eager and yet dignified deference, excusing himself negligently to Mr. Curtenty.

But Mr. Curtenty held the bottle. He held it victoriously; and it was no longer a bottle in a bit of paper—it was a sacred phial, magic, omnipotent, more powerful than man and than God. It held the key to the riddle of the future, and the short

answer to the arguments of the past. It gave Mr. Curtenty a sense of absolutism, of independence, of dignity, of conquest over earth, such as he had never had. It rendered Mr. Curtenty heroic, magnificent. Already he was leaving earth. He had no interest in earth; he was sick of it, disgusted with it. He yearned bitterly to be quit of it. He had little or no fear, for fear presumes imagination, and he had little or no imagination. He forgot the teachings of religion and the wrath of God, or, if he remembered them, remembered them only to despise them. He was the supreme egotist. He thought of nobody but himself. He was absorbed in himself. Some faint vision of an inquest flickered transiently through his brain. He sniggered at it and it vanished. He was triumphant. He was a hero, a conqueror, a poet. He was God.

"One-and-twopence, please," murmured Mr. Salter, between two respectful sentences addressed to the lady.

"*One-and-twopence!*" cried Mr. Curtenty, dropping the florin which he was holding suspended in mid-pocket. "*One-and-twopence!* Why! It hadn't ought to be more than tenpence-halfpenny!"

"I'm afraid it's one-and-two," said Mr. Salter, calmly.

"Not *me!*" Mr. Curtenty growled with finality, and, dropping the bottle on to the round indiarubber mat intended to receive coins, he walked with fury and grandeur out of the shop, not caring for forty Salters nor forty great ladies.

He muttered things to himself. Did Salter suppose that *he* was going to help to pay for all the fal-lals and gimcrackery of his new shop? Not him! They called him a miser and a skinflint. They might. But fair was fair, and impudence was impudence. Impudence, that was what it was! Impudence! Let Mr. Salter charge his one-and-twopences to them as had quarterly bills and wouldn't pay cash. But not to *him!* He knew to a certainty that Fresson, the "cash chemist" in Hanbridge, the great price-cutter, would sell him half a pint of Scheele's Acid for tenpence, if not ninepence-halfpenny. And to Fresson's he would go. Fresson's did not close until ten o'clock. Fresson was the friend of the poor and a hard-working man who toiled early and late. . . . Impudence! Impudence! . . .

People passing in the Market Place heard and saw Mr. Curtenty muttering and chuntering to himself. He noticed with resentment that he was observed, and walked off in the direction of Hanbridge. His resolution to carry out his plan was as firm as ever—for nothing could shake it—but he was equally determined not to be done in the eye.

III.

WOODISUN LANE is one of the ways from Bursley to Hanbridge. Indeed, from Bursley Market Place it is the shortest and the oldest way, but by far the worst way, by reason both of its gradients and its foul surface. However, Mr. Curtenty took it, in order, by a glance at the window of his home, to see whether Mrs. Curtenty was wastefully burning the last inch of the candle. She was not; the window gave no sign of light. Strange to say, Mrs. Curtenty's thriftiness disappointed him, because he wanted another grievance, he wanted dozens of grievances, to gather into his breast as St. Sebastian gathered arrows.

He had to be content with the one great grievance against Mr. Salter—Mr. Salter, who by his rapacity was forcing a determined and desperate man to walk unnecessarily over to Hanbridge on a dank night. Soon, by dint of reflection and savage concentration, the grievance swelled till it filled his whole mind and heart and soul.

Nearly at the top of the hill, at Bleakridge, Woodisun Lane debouches into the main thoroughfare, Trafalgar Road. Somewhat farther on is the football ground, where Bursley had never yet defeated Knype, and then there is a corner upon which had stood for centuries a small earthenware manufactory—one small manufactory succeeding another there from Plantagenet times onwards. Young Eddie Colclough had recently razed a small manufactory to the ground and was just finishing the erection of a new one of an experimental type wherein various modern dodges of economic organization were to be tested.

As he passed the building Mr. Curtenty's watchman's-nose sniffed the air, in the manner of a tiger sniffing distant blood. Mr. Curtenty became a nose and nothing but a nose; and his grievance and his purpose were equally forgotten. It might be said that Mr. Curtenty had no trade, but that he had a profession was richly demonstrated in that sniffing moment. He sniffed the night-watchman's arch-foe—smoke, indicating fire.

He looked at the façade, whose upper windows were still unglazed, and could see no curling wisp of smoke. But he had faith in his nose. Though the gates of the large central archway had not yet been put in place, the archway was stoutly boarded, and Mr. Curtenty could not get through it. He ran along and climbed a rough fence at the side of the manufactory, and so reached the back, which was less securely protected than the front from marauders. The next instant he was in the strewn quadrangle, or "yard" as it is called. And his

nose was justified, for he saw smoke meandering furtively, ominously, from a first-floor window. And his eyes detected a faint glow within.

Mr. Curtenty was gloriously alive. The price of Scheele's Acid was nothing to him. He was professionally inspired. He was happy in the midst of calamity and conflagration. He knew the first thing to do and the second thing to do, and did not hesitate a moment. In a quarter of a minute he was in Trafalgar Road again. A policeman, a policeman to take charge! But there was no policeman. In the Five Towns, so different from other localities, when you are engaged in the practice of virtue and philanthropy there never is a policeman within a mile; it is only when you happen to be delinquent that policemen spring magically out of the earth. There was nobody except three giggling and shrieking girls, arms mutually entwined round necks, swinging along the oozy pavement. Mr. Curtenty ignored them. But at the corner of the tiny Square, in front of Bleakridge's yellow church, burned a red lamp. Dr. Ackerington's, of course! Mr. Curtenty, forgetting dignity, and yet somehow preserving it, ran to the house and violently rang the bell. He rang it three times with increasing violence.

The door opened.

"'Ere! You're in a 'urry," said a stern, fat, middle-aged maid in cap and apron, as soon as she had satisfied herself that Mr. Curtenty did not belong to the ruling class.

"'Ave ye got th' telephone here?" Mr. Curtenty demanded stiffly.

"And if we have! You can't use it."

"Who wants for to use it? You tell your master or missus as Colclough's new pot-bank's afire, and they mun telephone for th' fire brigade." And as the wench, startled and impressed and stricken, did not immediately move, he added: "And look slippy!" Then he ran off.

WITHIN the quadrangle of the works once more he descried in the darkness what looked like a mound of sand. He put his hand into it. It was a mound of sand. Seizing one of several buckets which the builder's men had left, he filled it with sand and searched for and found stairs and gingerly mounted them in the black darkness, and guided by his triumphant nose he passed through a corridor and into a large suffocating room, which room was illuminated by the fire.

Planks of wood were just beginning to crackle. With the sand he smothered their ardour. But there was not enough sand. He descended again, with empty bucket, bungled the stairs, fell, hurt his ankle, swore, limped, got more sand, ascended. After three such ascents he had extinguished the fire and was in darkness. But he had seen enough to decide the origin of the fire. The usual thing! Workmen's negligence. They had been bivouacking in the room, they had made a fire in the grateless hearth —one of your sprawling fires—and they had not put it out on leaving. A few embers had reached a plank leaning at a broad angle against the mantelpiece, had patiently attacked the root of the plank—a slow business, but in the end successful; the plank, deprived of its base, had fallen sideways on to a heap of other planks. And so on. Had not the entire place sweated with damp it might have been a heap of ruins at the moment when Mr. Salter's rapacity had driven Mr. Curtenty in the direction of Hanbridge.

Mr. Curtenty, his occupation gone, limped through other corridors and rooms until he saw the light of Trafalgar Road street-lamps through an unglazed window. He looked out, himself unseen. A crowd, small but increasing, was gazing stolidly up at the façade of the works. It could perceive nothing of interest; it had no impulse to do anything; it merely gazed, in the faint hope of witnessing some terrific catastrophe. No policeman! No fire-engine! A tramcar roared by, unheeding. Mr. Curtenty continued to look out, proud, patient, invisible, scornful of the crowd. He was triumphant—nearly as triumphant as he had been fifty minutes earlier when he held the sacred phial in his hand. What a world! What destiny!

The expectant crowd in the mire was in due course rewarded by the exciting arrival, from Hanbridge way, of a motor-car full of people—Eddie Colclough, a young newly-married wife, and friends. Dr. Ackerington being out, Mrs. Ackerington had telephoned not only to the fire brigade, but to Eddie, who lived at Cauldon, between Hanbridge and Oldcastle. Mr. and Mrs. Eddie were entertaining at dinner two gentlemen and a lady, and, all being young and adventurous, they had instantly decided to leave dinner and come in a body to the scene of the announced conflagration.

Mr. Curtenty, seeing them and guessing that Mr. Colclough must be among them, went downstairs with pain in his ankle. Eddie, followed by Mrs. Eddie and the others, was in the quadrangle almost before him.

"Where's the fire?" Mr. Colclough demanded fiercely, in bewilderment; he was intensely relieved to see no evidence of a fire, but also—rather illogically—annoyed to see no evidence of a fire.

"It ain't anywhere. I've put it out," answered Mr. Curtenty, coldly, challengingly.

"And who the devil are you, anyway?" cried Mr. Colclough, who was of an aggressive and hasty disposition.

"Mr. Curtenty's my name," said Mr. Curtenty, "and if you'll come upstairs I'll shownd ye a thing or two." His tone gave pause to Mr. Colclough, and at the same time allayed Mr. Colclough's rising suspicion of some hanky-panky in the rumour of the fire.

"Strike a match," ordered Mr. Colclough at the dark stairs, feeling vainly in his pockets.

"I dunna' smoke," said Mr. Curtenty, grimly.

However, one of the other gentlemen had one of the new-fangled electric torches. The six of them stood in the scene of the conflagration and heard Mr. Curtenty's description of the great episode: how he was passing, how his nose gave the alarm, how he sent for the fire brigade, how he used the sand, how he sprained his ankle, and how all's well that ends well; the whole recital being supported by charred timber and the heavy odour of wood-smoke.

The ray of the electric torch lighted Mr. Curtenty's smoke-grimed face. The rest of them—the fashionable aristocracy, including two young and beautiful women—were in shadow. Mr. Curtenty's tale was faultless; it extorted admiration, a little unwilling perhaps at first from Eddie Colclough, but spontaneous enough from the others, and especially from the women.

"Well, here's something for you," said Mr. Colclough, and handed Mr. Curtenty a sovereign.

"Thank ye."

"You must be used to fires," said Mrs. Colclough, smiling warmly.

Mr. Curtenty majestically offered some of his personal history.

"And who are you working for now?" asked Mr. Colclough.

"I'm playing [out of work]," said Mr. Curtenty.

Mr. Colclough paused.

"What did you say your name was?"

"Mr. Curtenty."

"Well, look here, Curtenty," said Mr. Colclough, and paused again, as though hesitating in his mind.

Mr. Curtenty did not repine at the rough, careless omission of the "Mr."; experience had been teaching him.

"Look here, Curtenty. There's no watchman here yet. D'you want a job?"

Mr. Curtenty was engaged on the spot.

Suddenly he hurried from the room. The others followed him. The electric torch lighted him from behind. His ears had been copying the excellent example of his nose. He reached one of the front unglazed windows and put his head through a square. A fire engine had arrived with an enormous fluster and bluster and glint of brass helmets. A fine effort on the part of the Bursley Fire Brigade—forty minutes!

Mr. Curtenty bawled angrily, disdainfully, to the brigade:—

"It's out! Get away wi' yer sprinklin' mashane! It's out! I'm a-telling on ye!"

Then he turned and faced the torch.

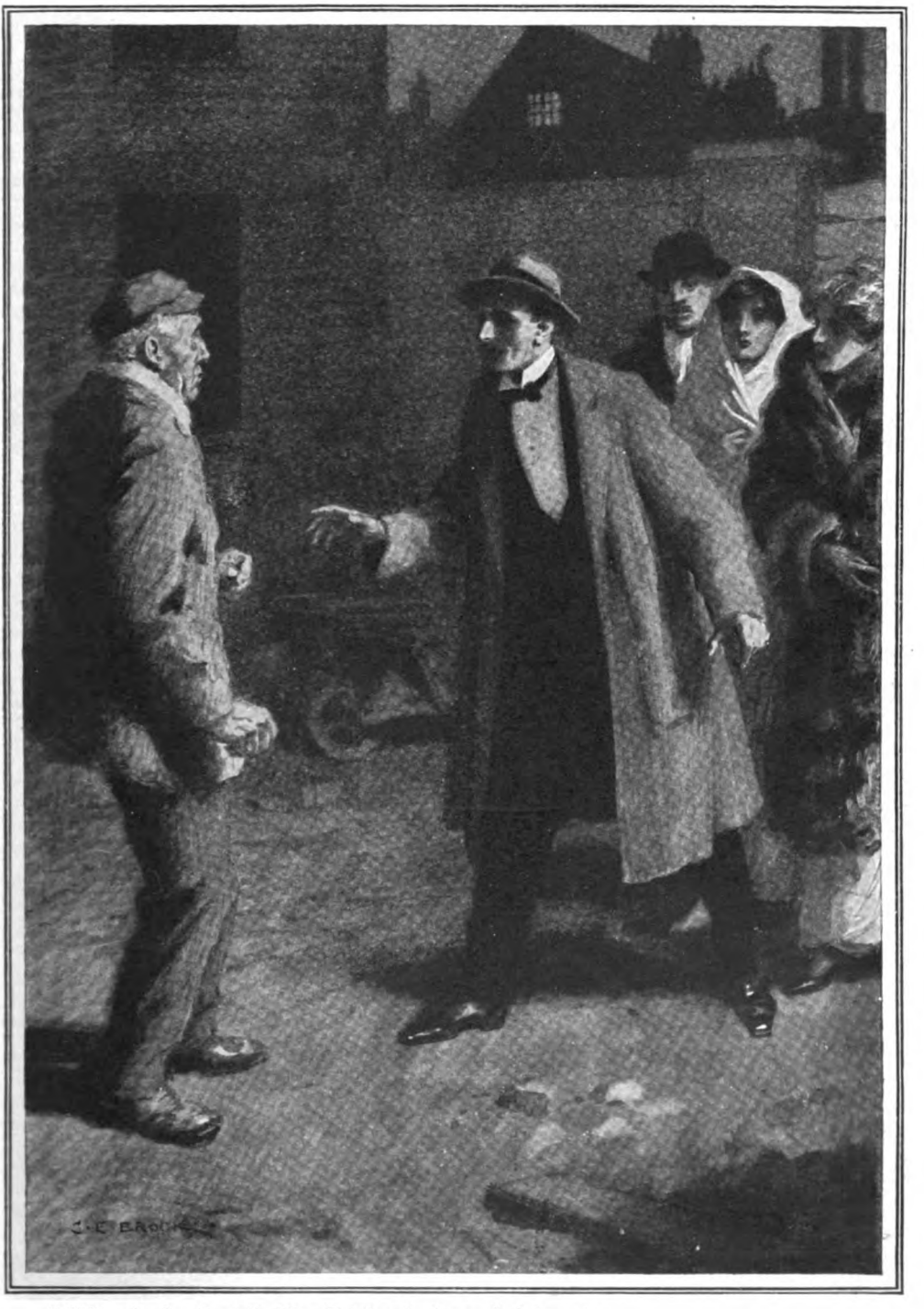
"You perfect *duck!*" exclaimed young Mrs. Colclough, and carried away by gratitude for a great deed, and by her youthful sentimentalism and the general influence of a honeymoon and the comicality of Mr. Curtenty's dirty tweed cap—in all her beauty and all her finery she put her ringed hands on the shoulders of the old man and kissed his sooty plain face.

## IV.

IN Duck Square (which is really only a bit of Duck Bank and not a square at all) there is an establishment (not to be confused with the Boro' Dining Rooms two doors off) which stays open till a late hour nightly, brilliantly lit amid the surrounding gloom, and which exudes from its interior an odour so appetizing and powerful that it has been known to interfere with the Wednesday evening prayer meeting in the Wesleyan chapel a hundred yards away on the opposite side of Trafalgar Road.

Mr. Curtenty entered this establishment and, pulling a florin from his pocket, bought two plenteous portions of the finest fried fish. He then bought a candle, though candles were not in her line of business, from the white-clad proprietress, who gave him a few matches into the bargain. Then he went across to the fast-closing Dragon Hotel and in the nick of time bought a bottle of beer. Having unlocked the door of the cottage in Woodisun Lane with his own key, he took off his boots at the bottom of the stairs, struck a light, and proceeded upwards, heavily encumbered, into his one-roomed home.

Young Mrs. Curtenty was fast asleep; the blaze of the candle did not awaken her. He examined her face with a new interest. His heart was loudly beating (but that, of course, was the effect of the stairs—what else could it be?). He was vaguely aware, too, of a non-fleshly throbbing, a quaking, a half-pleasant, half-frightening general disturbance in his mind or his soul or somewhere. He could not quite surely identify the phenomenon. It might have been some imperfect realization of the dread fact that



"Where's the fire?" Mr. Colclough demanded fiercely.
"It ain't anywhere. I've put it out," answered Mr. Curtenty, boldly, challengingly.

but for the accident of a fire he would at that moment have been elsewhere, or nowhere at all and nothing at all. On the other hand, it might be due to alarm at his own wild and reckless expenditure in the fried fish shop and the Dragon Hotel.

It was the heavenly odour of the fried fish that first caused his wife to dream a delicious dream and then woke her. As her senses gradually brought her back into the sphere of reality, she opened her ingenuous eyes and saw Mr. Curtenty bending over her, candle in hand. The memory of Mrs. Colclough's kiss was now the chief thing in Mr. Curtenty's mind. It somehow thrilled him, and it somehow took thirty years off Mrs. Curtenty's age.

"Rally thysen up, wench," said Mr. Curtenty in a tone so startlingly new and attractive to Mrs. Curtenty that she could not move.

He wanted to bend down and embrace her, but was prevented by an unconquerable complex that held him fast and told him not to be ridiculous.

"Rally thysen up," he repeated, "and put th' blanket round thy shoulders."

"Jimmy," said she, hopefully, "then us'll go to Harriet's at Longshaw tomorrow?"

"Not me!"

"I shall," said she, sadly. "They'll make me. Aye, lad, I'm going, I am!" She sighed.

"Thee isna'," he almost shouted. "I've gotten a job. Rally up and set this 'ere fish on a platter."

She raised herself on her elbows and kissed him; *she* had no forbidding complex. The kiss was what he wanted. This kiss was the second in one hour, and the second in perhaps six months or more. And the lips were as cool and fresh as Mrs. Colclough's. And the kiss had a quality mysteriously surpassing that of Mrs. Colclough's.

Mr. Curtenty felt himself obliged for form's sake to show impatience at the salute.

"'Ere," he grunted. "Thou'rt shaking candle grease all o'er th' bed."

Nevertheless, he himself adjusted the blanket round his wife's exposed arms and neck.


# "Days of My Life"

BY

# H. RIDER HAGGARD

In our next issue will appear the first instalment of the eagerly-awaited Autobiography left by the celebrated author of "King Solomon's Mines," "She," and many other thrilling romances, in which he relates the romantic story of his adventurous life and tells how these tales came to be written—with stories of famous people and letters never before published.

# The English Filter

By

## C. E. BECHHOFER ROBERTS

*ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL*

***This story is written in collaboration with a well-known Professor of Science, so the reader may rest assured that nothing is related that could not actually have happened.***

I AM unlikely ever to forget the visit that my friend, A. B. C. Hawkes, the scientist, and I paid to Rome. "A. B. C.," as I always call him, had let only one man know we were coming—his old acquaintance, Professor Castagni, the bacteriologist. We were astonished, therefore, to find at least a hundred people awaiting us at the station.

Castagni introduced many of them, a lengthy business, and I was amused to discover that his instinctive Italian love of pageantry had apparently caused him to marshal representatives of every branch of learning in the city. I found myself, for example, walking to the hotel with an elderly historian on one side, who knew a little French and less English and delivered himself of an uninterrupted flow of words in both languages, while at the other ear was a still older professor of philosophy who spoke only Italian—of which tongue I am ignorant, although this did not seem to prevent his addressing me in it.

Hawkes, in the inevitable grey frock-coat and sponge-bag trousers, with a rose in his buttonhole, was submerged in an excited crowd, from whom there rose a Babel of welcome and congratulation. Our arrival was a comic triumph.

The moment we reached our hotel, however, they all bowed, shook our hands, and withdrew.

"What a nerve-racking experience, A. B. C.," I commented, as my friend and I reached our rooms.

"And, of course, the one man I do want to meet wasn't there," Hawkes replied.

I asked who this was.

"Ribotta, the physicist," A. B. C. said. "He must be an old man now, and, I confess, I had never rated him very highly. But just lately he's published some really very remarkable papers on atomic magnetism. How he's managed to make up fifty years' leeway in his work, I don't pretend to know. But that is what I've come to Rome to find out."

There was a tap at the door, and a young Italian entered.

"My name is Dorsi, Professor Castagni's assistant," he said in perfect English. "The professor wishes me to act as your guide here in Rome."

"That is most kind of you both," said Hawkes with assumed gratification. "But really, I mustn't trouble you."

"It is truly a pleasure. I appreciate the honour of coming into contact with so famous a man of science. Of course, if you wish to rest now after your journey, I will wait for you downstairs."

A. B. C. smiled resignedly.

"What my friend Johnstone and I really want," he said, "is an early lunch. I see it's just twelve—perhaps we may indulge our appetites. You will lunch with us, Mr. Dorsi, I trust?"

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Our guest proved a sympathetic and intelligent young man. Educated partly in England, he had a sound knowledge of our language and tastes. I could see that Hawkes liked him as well as I did.

"Now, Mr. Dorsi," said A. B. C., as the waiter served the coffee and we lit our cigars. "You tell me that I may expect to be able to pay my formal call on Professor Castagni at three o'clock. Right! The only other visit I am anxious to make is to Professor Ribotta. His latest work interests me profoundly."

"That will be very simple," said Dorsi. "If you like, we can go there now—he is sure to be in his laboratory. And while you are there, gentlemen, I should advise you to talk to his assistant as well."

"You are trying to tell me something," remarked A. B. C., with a shrewd glance.

The Italian smiled.

"The facts are these, professor," he commenced.

"Holy Darwin! Don't call me 'professor'!" cried A. B. C. "Anything but that! The word suggests all the academic foibles I most detest—vanity, pedantry, untidiness, petty jealousies, and tyranny!"

"You must excuse this outburst, Mr. Dorsi," I laughed. "It is a form of address that always rouses his tempestuous nature."

Dorsi stole a humorous glance at the scientist's flaming red hair and smiled more broadly.

"Well, then, Mr. Hawkes," he began again — ("That's better!" murmured A. B. C.)—"I am perhaps being indiscreet, but your time is too valuable to be wasted. Professor Ribotta—I emphasize the title in this case—is not responsible for the theories you speak of. He takes the credit for them, but it is due to his assistant, Mr. Lavorello. You know the stupid system we have in our Continental universities—promotion goes by seniority, and a position may be held for life, or at least to a very advanced age, by any old man who does not wish to retire on a pension. That is the case of Professor Ribotta. He holds a chair for which, however well he may have filled it thirty years ago, he is to-day quite unqualified. You will see this for yourselves. But Lavorello—ah, there is a young man of the first quality, an experimenter without rival in all Italy, a scientific genius."

"I have heard of such cases before," said A. B. C. "I shall make a point of getting into touch with him. Thank you for your friendly advice. Shall we be going?"

THE three of us set out for Ribotta's laboratory, which we found in an old part of the city, near the Pantheon. The entrance was remote from the main portion of the institute, and Dorsi told us that it led to Ribotta's and his assistant's rooms only.

The porter inside took off his cap to us and led us into a small room which, Dorsi told me, was the preserve of the laboratory attendant. It was dark and confined; the remains of a meal lay on the table and a couple of dirty overalls hung on a hook on the wall.

We stopped before another door, on which the porter knocked.

It was opened to us by Ribotta himself, to whom Dorsi swiftly explained who we were. The professor, an old man with a flowing beard and piercing eyes, then invited us to enter. He greeted A. B. C. effusively, led us to his desk, and motioned to us to sit down. He leaned forward in his chair, holding a hand to his ear.

"You speak not Italian, I think, Professor Hawkes?" he said in a broken English that I shall not attempt to reproduce exactly. "You do? Well, no matter; I prefer to speak English. Oh, I am very fond of England. Forty years ago I was at Cambridge under your great professors." He mentioned some famous names. "They taught me much—but I see you are too young to know them. I have not been in England since then, but I still have my great love for English things. I have many beautiful English things in my laboratory. I will call my assistant; he shall show them to you. Lavorello! Lavorello! Ah, he does not hear me. No matter, I will send the attendant to him. Carlo!" he called.

"That wretched attendant," the garrulous old man went on, "I cannot make him obey me. He attends only to Mr. Lavorello's work; he leaves my laboratory dirty. When he comes, he will hear from me. And now I will call my assistant myself."

He pounded on a door at the other side of the room. We heard a chair pushed back and the slamming of a door. Through an unglazed, barred window that gave on to a corridor—apparently the only ventilation of the room, for all the other windows were tightly closed—we saw a man pass.

Ribotta tittered. "You think it odd, perhaps," he said. "My assistant is in the next room, but he cannot come in through the connecting door. Ah, this is done on purpose. I do not want anybody to come into the room. So I locked that door twenty years ago, and it has remained locked ever since. He must come in the way you came, the only entrance. And that has a Yale lock, so that nobody can come in except myself and the attendant, unless I let them in myself. Only he and I have keys. Even the porter I never allow to enter. I

want quiet, and in this way I get it. Ah, there must be Lavorello ! "

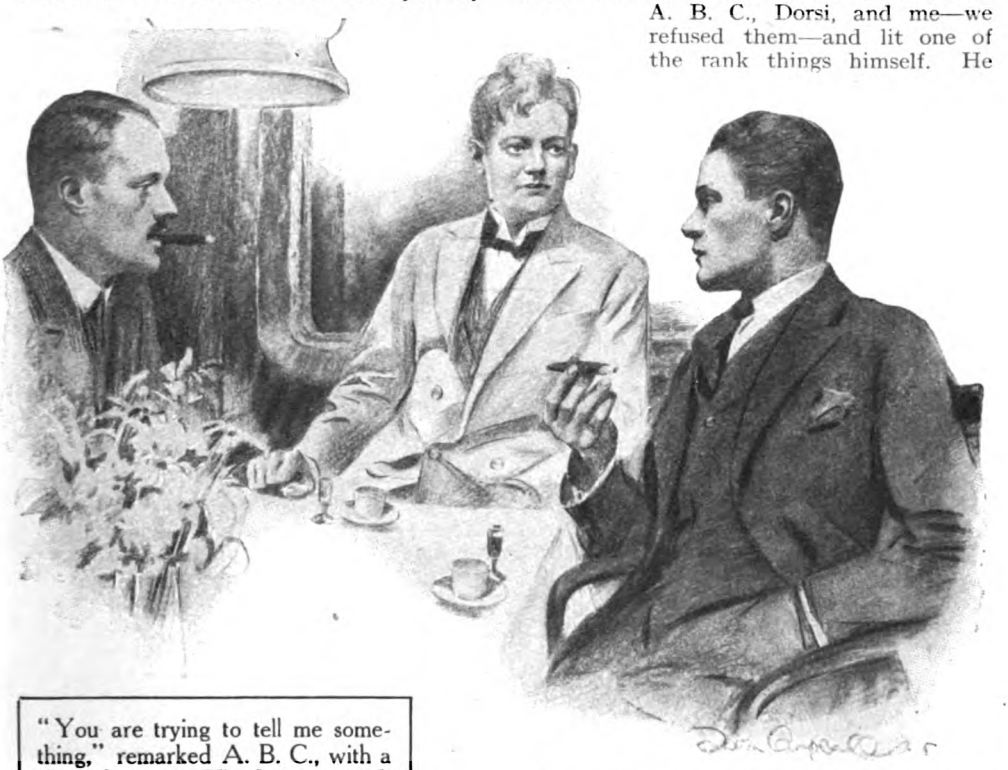
He motioned to Dorsi, and our guide slipped across to unfasten the door. A young man entered, keen and dark, but very fleshy for his age—a point, we afterwards discovered, on which he was rather sensitive. I looked at him with interest, for he was the brilliant youth whose work had brought Hawkes to Rome.

" Sit down, Lavorello, sit down," cried Ribotta. " But no, I want you to show my English guests the great things that have come here from their country. First give them a glass of water from my filter."

Without a word the young man went over to a large glass tank, uncovered at the top and with some kind of filter and tap attached. It was one of the most noticeable objects in the peculiarly bare room. He filled a glass from it and brought this to us. Ribotta held it under Hawkes's nose.

" Taste ! " he said. " What beautiful clear water ! Rome water is not good to drink, but out of my English filter—ah, then one may drink with pleasure and safety. Lavorello, empty this ash-tray and give me some matches ! "

Expressionlessly Lavorello obeyed. Then Ribotta told him to get the cigars out of a drawer, and the old man offered them to A. B. C., Dorsi, and me—we refused them—and lit one of the rank things himself. He did not trouble to offer one to Lavorello, I noticed.



" You are trying to tell me something," remarked A. B. C., with a shrewd glance. The Italian smiled. " The facts are these, professor," he commenced.

" Now you have seen the filter," he rattled on. " Next you must see the English microscope. Lavorello, bring the microscope and show it to Professor Hawkes."

It was, even I could see, a very ordinary piece of laboratory apparatus, but the old man gloated over it as if it were a marvel.

" Very interesting indeed," murmured A. B. C. ; " but have you any new results in your work on magnetism, sir ? "

" No, I have not them here at the moment. I do not make the experiments myself these days ; I leave them to the young men. Lavorello shall show you them in his laboratory. It is good work—I showed him how it should be done. The brains are mine : the hand is his. That is how it should be, is it not ? "

For politeness' sake, we agreed.

" Do have another glass of water, Professor Hawkes. No ? Ah, but it is good, thanks to my English filter. Your friend, then ? Oh, you must ! Lavorello, bring another glass of water ! Quickly ! If you

drank more of this water, Lavorello, you would not be so fat! There is no water like this in Rome."

It tasted to me like any other water, but I thought it incumbent on me to express loud admiration.

"We must not take up any more of your time, sir," said Hawkes, rising from his chair. "With your permission, we shall just glance at Mr. Lavorello's work, and then we must be going away."

"Delighted to have seen you, professor," said Ribotta, shaking our hands. "I am always glad to welcome foreign scientists to my laboratory, especially from England. Lavorello, you are to show these gentlemen your work—*our* work—so that they may see that we old men can still keep pace with the young. Ah, but first give me some more matches."

As we left the laboratory through the little anteroom, the attendant hurried in. He was, I noticed, a sinister-looking fellow, the sort of man one would instinctively avoid on a dark night. He went past us into the professor's room, the door of which he opened with his pass-key, and we heard the old man greet him with a storm of angry words.

The corridor led us round towards Lavorello's room. Dorsi in a whisper called my attention to the cupboards and bookcases that were placed against the doors leading to the rest of the building—another example of Ribotta's insistence upon isolation. As we passed the barred window, we saw the attendant standing by the desk, gazing at the professor with a malicious glance. The old man was shouting and gesticulating, but, as he heard us go by, he turned and waved.

We reached Lavorello's laboratory, the whole atmosphere of which was very different from the old professor's, and A. B. C. and he were soon bent in eager interest over note-books and curves, with an occasional reference to some proof-sheets that lay on the table.

They forgot all about Dorsi and myself. The subject was far beyond either of us and we passed the time chatting.

"It's pretty clear," Dorsi said, after a long and bitter attack upon the old man in the next room, "with whom Mr. Hawkes finds himself more at home."

I sympathized with his denunciation of Ribotta's selfishness, his ridiculous pride in the very ordinary filter and microscope, and his bullying treatment of Lavorello, but, as a stranger, I thought it best not to be drawn into the expression of an opinion, and I looked round for an opportunity to change the subject.

"Hallo," I said, thankfully, "here is something I do understand a little about."

I walked over to a cabinet in the corner of the room, in which were ranged objects that I recognized as Italian and Greek-Italian antiques. There were coins and little statuettes and rings and toys and other trifles.

Lavorello happened to see us gazing at

his collection. He smiled and unlocked the door of the cabinet.

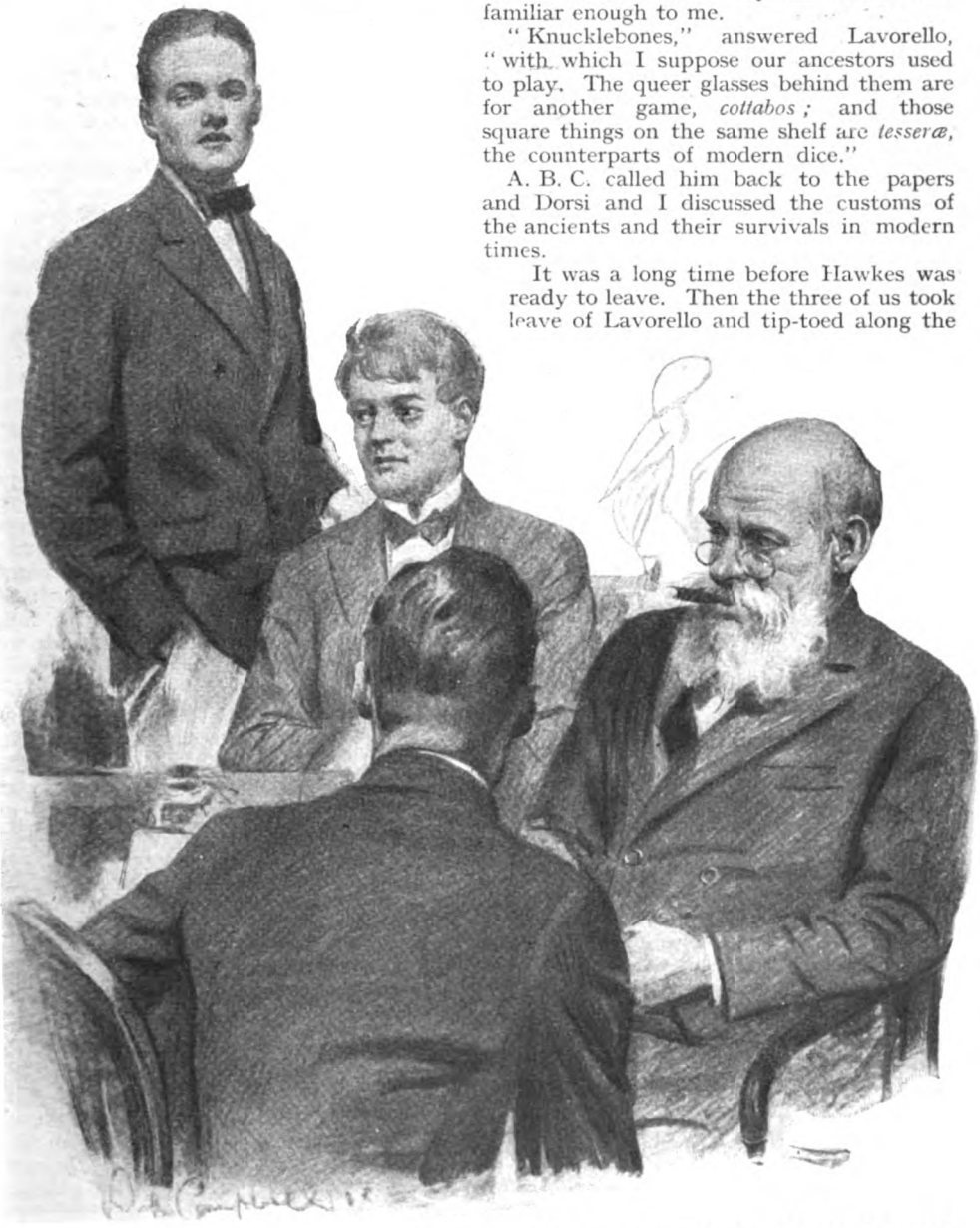
"A hobby of mine," he said to me. "My country—I am a Sicilian, you know—is especially rich in such things."

"What are these?" asked Dorsi, pointing to some small white objects, which were familiar enough to me.

"Knucklebones," answered Lavorello, "with which I suppose our ancestors used to play. The queer glasses behind them are for another game, *cottabos;* and those square things on the same shelf are *tesseræ*, the counterparts of modern dice."

A. B. C. called him back to the papers and Dorsi and I discussed the customs of the ancients and their survivals in modern times.

It was a long time before Hawkes was ready to leave. Then the three of us took leave of Lavorello and tip-toed along the corridor so as not to attract Ribotta's attention, for we had no desire to be called in to hear another harangue. We glanced in through the barred opening and saw him at his desk, with his beloved filter beyond him underneath the clock. Fortunately he was absorbed in a newspaper and did not notice us pass.



"Do have another glass of water, Professor Hawkes. No? Oh, you must! Lavorello, bring another glass of water! Quickly!"

"Shades of Cavendish!" whispered A. B. C. "It's three o'clock already!"

We hurried past the porter's lodge, to whose occupant the laboratory attendant was declaiming fiercely.

"The attendant's opinion of Ribotta," A. B. C. said to me when we got outside, "is not much higher than our own, I'm afraid. If my knowledge of Italian, or at least of the Roman dialect, is not in error, he was expressing a wish that the old professor might be devoured by hungry wolves. He added that, if they or some similar agents of destiny did not perform this necessary action, he himself would have to attend to it. I must confess, after comparing Ribotta's and Lavorello's capacity, I have some sympathy with the attendant's desire."

"Lavorello is a good man, is he?" I said.

"First-rate," said my friend. "A brilliant, ingenious brain with a magnificent grasp of scientific possibilities! If he has a fault, it's a tendency to rush at conclusions, to go the short way to a result when a longer and more patient method would be more suitable. But he'll go far! It's a crying shame that he should be held back by that old charlatan. And for the latter to steal the credit of Lavorello's researches is an insult to science."

For a moment Hawkes's round, good-natured face looked quite angry, but his usual smile soon reappeared.

We made a short call on Castagni, and spent the rest of the afternoon in the Forum. Not only did we visit the usual sights there, but, as honoured guests, we were invited to view various collections and excavations not open to the general public.

For once I was able to display more knowledge than Hawkes, and, to his mock awe, I traced resemblances between some of the exhibits and various specimens I had unearthed on the more successful of my archæological expeditions in England. A. B. C. was in his element, however, with some ancient scientific instruments, and his identification of their uses has now, I understand, been officially adopted. I learned from the director of the excavations that Lavorello had performed a similar service at the time of some earlier discoveries.

WE were to meet Dorsi for dinner at the "Ulpia," which he recommended as the most picturesque restaurant in the city. We found it in an ancient basilica, whose curved brick walls, arching to the roof, made a curious and sombre background for the bright napery and electric lights. The blend of old and new—so typical of Rome—was carried down to the smallest details; the lamps, for example, were fixed in amphoræ of antique form, and the menu was rolled like an old parchment scroll. The place amused us, and we settled down patiently to await our guest.

An hour after the agreed time we despaired of his arrival and decided to begin. At ten o'clock, just as we were about to leave, he came in.

"Forgive my absence," he said, "but a terrible thing has happened. Professor Ribotta has been murdered!"

"Murdered!" I exclaimed.

"He was found poisoned in his laboratory this afternoon," Dorsi went on. A pallid smile flickered on his lips as he added, "The poison was apparently administered in the filter of which he was so proud."

"Who did it?" A. B. C. asked.

"The attendant has disappeared, and the police are in search of him. The chief of police is in the laboratory now, and, as you were among the last people to see the professor alive, he wishes to interrogate you. He was going to send to your hotel, but I volunteered to come here and fetch you."

We called for the bill and left the restaurant in silence. We walked through the warm night to the laboratory, and found it ablaze with lights. A group of men were standing in the dead man's room, among them Lavorello and the porter, both much moved.

The body had been removed to a neighbouring mortuary for examination. They told us that the professor had been found sitting upright at his desk, just as we had seen him as we tip-toed out that same afternoon. Tightly grasped in his hand was a glass of water, of which he had drunk perhaps a half; and his eyes were fixed in a rigid stare.

The chief of police asked Hawkes a string of questions, writing the replies in a notebook.

"There seems no doubt," Dorsi said to me, "that the attendant is the villain. We all heard the quarrel and the threats he uttered against the old man. He, the attendant, was seen to leave the building a few minutes after three o'clock; in fact, he did not go back into the laboratory after we left. Lavorello says that at a quarter past five, on his way out to the baths that he visits every afternoon to try to reduce his weight, he spoke to Ribotta through the barred window from the corridor. The porter confirms that Lavorello went out at that time. Now comes the important evidence: at half-past five the attendant came in—not too sober, the porter thinks, and still muttering threats against the old man—and entered his little room, through which alone,

as you know, it is possible to enter this laboratory.

" He came out ten minutes later and has not been seen since. At six o'clock, twenty minutes after the attendant went away, the porter knocked on the inner door to give the professor a message. Alarmed at receiving no reply, he went round to the barred window and called to him. When he saw that the old gentleman did not move, he called some students who were passing by. They had, of course, to smash down the door to enter, and they discovered old Ribotta dead with the glass in his hand."

I was considering these facts when a stir outside was followed by the appearance of a couple of policemen with the attendant.

The villain was even more unprepossessing than before; he was both drunk and frightened.

The chief of police told him that he was suspected of causing the professor's death, and the man, moistening his parched lips, vehemently denied the charge. Ordered to account for his movements that afternoon, he said the professor had driven him past endurance and he had gone away in a temper. He thought this must have been about three o'clock.

He went to a wine-shop and had some drinks and then made up his mind to go home to his village, a few miles out of the city, but on his way he remembered that he had left some personal belongings in his room and came back to fetch them. After making a parcel of them, he said, he went away again, without entering the laboratory at all. Then he took the tram to his home, where the police had just arrested him.

He repeatedly denied that he had gone into the professor's laboratory during his short return. He had, he insisted, stayed in his own little room and made his parcel.

Asked whether he had not uttered threats against the professor's life earlier in the afternoon, he at first said he had not. But, confronted with the evidence of the porter and ourselves, he had to admit that in the heat of his anger he might have done so.

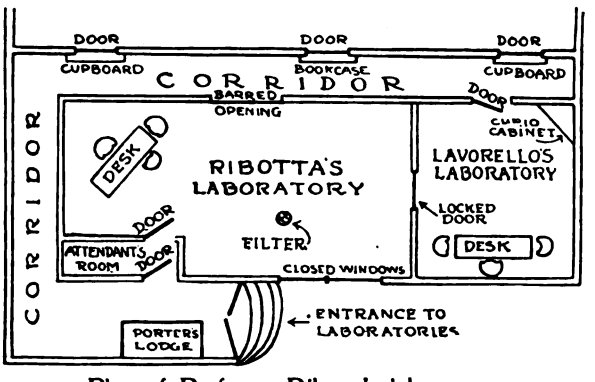
His account in other respects certainly tallied with the previous statements. But the damning facts remained that only he and the dead man had keys to the laboratory and that he had admittedly been in the ante-room between the time Ribotta was last seen alive—by Lavorello, at a quarter past five—and the time of his being found dead at six o'clock.

Suddenly the chief turned to the porter. " And you ? " he said. " Did you enter the laboratory during that period ? " A. B. C. interpreted all this to me.

" The professor never permitted me inside," answered the porter. " And I had no key. No one had a key, not even Signor Lavorello, except the professor and the attendant."

" Perhaps the professor opened the door to somebody else, or the murderer had provided himself with a third key ? "

" Even so," was the reply, " my lodge is opposite the door of the ante-room, and I should have seen anyone enter it. Nobody did. There is no other entrance to the laboratory."




Plan of Professor Ribotta's laboratory.

The chief went round the room, examining it. As he showed us, there was indeed no other entrance than by the door from the attendant's room. The door to Lavorello's room was still bolted, and it was clear that it had not been opened. The dust on the skylight and on the windows proved that they, too, had not been tampered with. As for the window to the corridor, the bars were firmly fixed in the mortar; a baby could not have climbed between them.

WE were asked to accompany the party to the mortuary. A sheet was reverently pulled back and the dead man's face revealed. I watched the attendant. He shuddered and crossed himself surreptitiously. One might have said that his very emotion testified to his guilt.

The unnatural rigidity of the dead man's features seemed to interest Hawkes. He took a glass from his pocket and intently examined the staring eyes for some minutes. Then he entered upon a conversation with the doctors in a corner of the room, where they were working.

When the rest of us went out, glad to leave the presence of death, A. B. C. did not immediately follow. Dorsi and I waited outside, after seeing the prisoner removed,

protesting violently, by the police. My friend came out at last.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you must excuse me. Johnstone, take Mr. Dorsi back to the hotel and entertain him—and Mr. Lavorello too, if he will accompany you. I am going to help with the medical examination."

"What a gruesome idea!" I said.

"My erudite friend," he replied, "you ought to know my interest in the borderline between physics and physiology. Good night." And he hurried back inside the mortuary.

We walked to the hotel, discussing the terrible event.

"I suppose," I said, "it is certain the poor man was poisoned?"

"Of that there is no doubt," said Dorsi. "The doctors suspected it from the first, and Mr. Hawkes, who seems to know everything, agrees with them. They all think it is a poison of the strychnine class, although probably not strychnine itself."

"It ought to be easy to find where the attendant procured it," I suggested.

"In England it might be," smiled Lavorello, "but not, I fear, in Rome. However, as no one but the attendant could possibly have entered and dropped it in the filter, the question where he obtained it hardly seems to matter."

"Can it possibly have been introduced through the walls or the roof or the windows?" I asked.

"Impossible," said Dorsi. "Stupid and deaf as the old man was, he was very keen-sighted, and, sitting at his desk with the filter right in front of him, he would have noticed any attempt to tamper with it. Besides, how on earth could anyone have done so, when it was in the very middle of the room?"

I had to admit that they were right.

They would not come in with me, and we parted at the entrance to my hotel. I sat in my room for some time, but I saw nothing to shake my conviction that the attendant was guilty. This seemed established beyond the possibility of doubt.

HAWKES did not return all that night, nor was he in the hotel when I left it the next morning to visit St. Peter's and one of the Vatican galleries. I lunched in a little restaurant near the Cathedral and returned to the hotel in the middle of the afternoon.

I found A. B. C. waiting for me. From his look I guessed that he had spent the whole night on his researches.

"Well, what news?" he asked.

"I look to you for that, A. B. C.," I replied. "Has the attendant confessed?"

"Not yet; but things are very black against him."

"You look tired," I said. "Why don't you lie down for a while?"

"I am a little fatigued," he admitted. "Between you and me, Ribotta dead presents more scientific interest than he did alive, but he is equally wearying in both states. I fear you will think that remark in bad taste. I don't think I'll lie down, however. What would you say to taking a Turkish bath—a Roman bath, I suppose I ought to call it here? Our full-bodied friend Lavorello patronizes the baths every afternoon, it seems, like the lover of antique Roman customs that he is, and I have arranged to visit one of them with him to-day. I hope you will accompany us."

I readily agreed, and we drove off to the laboratory and picked up Lavorello. We took the opportunity to glance in at the dead man's room, and I confirmed my impressions of the case. Nobody could possibly have entered it except through the attendant's room.

THE three of us were soon in the baths enjoying the delights that Lavorello, lying on a slab near us, assured us were the daily pleasures of the ancient Romans. His admiration for my friend was so evident, and he addressed his conversation so exclusively to him, that A. B. C. seemed to fear that I was being unduly relegated to the background.

"Cease to emulate the modest violet, friend Johnstone," he smiled. "Discourse to us upon topics suitable to the occasion. An archæologist like you ought to welcome the society of a fellow-enthusiast like Mr. Lavorello—Professor Lavorello, I suppose his friends will call him now. Expound to us, my able adjutant, the pastimes of antique Roman society in the baths they frequented."

"Surely, A. B. C.," I said, "Mr. Lavorello is better qualified than I? His collection shows him to be a specialist."

"I doubt it," said Hawkes. "He has been too busy, I am sure, adequately to interest himself in the subject; is that not so, Lavorello?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Lavorello; "I have found time in my leisure moments to study it with a certain thoroughness."

"Theory, theory, all is theory!" A. B. C. scoffed. "I'll wager, for example, that you, Lavorello, couldn't even tell me the right way to hold those old knucklebones that are in your cabinet."

"Surely knucklebones are played to-day pretty much as they ever were?" said the Italian. "The simplest and yet the most difficult game is to toss them one after the other in the air and to endeavour to catch

the whole set—three or five—on the back of your hand. It is difficult, but after long practice I found I could do it."

"So you have joined practice to theory after all," said A. B. C. "I apologize for my unworthy doubts. Now, Johnstone, I give you one more chance to retrieve your reputation as an archæologist. Tell me some other game that the ancients played on such occasions as these—and in such prodigious heat as this."

"That's easy," I said. "I was reminded of it yesterday. Mr. Lavorello has the instruments in his cabinet. It is the old game of *cottabos*."

"Oh, how do you play that, friend Lavorello?"

"I am afraid," replied he, laughing, "my knowledge stops short at knucklebones. As you hinted, I am not a universal genius."

"Now, splendid Johnstone, cover yourself with glory! Tell us how the royal and ancient game of *cottabos* was played."

"As far as I remember," I said, "the players amused themselves with it at drinking parties. The aim of the game was to throw wine from a specially-shaped glass in such a way that the liquid travelled through the air without scattering. This was done, according to German scholars, who know everything about everything, by a particular twirling movement imparted to the glass. The object was to sink a little metal saucer floating in a sunken tank by casting the wine into it. Isn't that right, Mr. Lavorello?"

JUST at that moment Dorsi entered, smiling at the sight of us three in our scanty attire.

"What stifling heat!" he said. "You sent for me, Mr. Hawkes?"

"Yes," said A. B. C. "I wanted you to know that I have discovered the murderer of Professor Ribotta."

"You have?" we exclaimed, in one breath.

"I thought, sir, the police arrested him yesterday," said Dorsi.

"No, dear Dorsi, no. The attendant had no hand in the crime."

"But it was proved——" I began.

"It was proved, my intelligent compatriot, that the attendant entered the building at half-past five for a few minutes. The corpse was not discovered till six, and so it was taken for granted that the man had entered the professor's room and dropped the poison in the filter."

"Exactly," I said.

"But when I saw the corpse," A. B. C. went on, "I was struck at once by the peculiar red discoloration of the eyes. There is a certain obscure poison of the strychnine class which produces this effect. It also produces almost instantaneous death. As you know, the eye is like a camera, with the retina at the back like a sensitive plate, on which the different pictures are continually formed. Now, this poison makes the lens lose its transparency, with the result that no light enters, and the eyeball becomes like a camera with the shutter closed.

"It occurred to me, therefore, that the picture that was cast on the retina at the moment of death might have persisted. Of course, we should not perceive this picture direct. I thought, however, that it might be possible, as it were, to develop the image. The doctors agreed to allow me to try. I will not give you details of the method, for they are not particularly pleasant to hear. We were not successful with the first eye; the work was more difficult than I had suspected. But from the second I got a blurred picture—not a studio photograph, perhaps, but sufficient for our purpose. That picture told me all I wanted to know."

"What did it show?" I asked.

"Just the clock on the wall, on which, as I took the trouble to observe this afternoon, the rays of the afternoon sun fall. Now that photograph on the dead man's retina, which was the last thing he saw in this life, showed with clearness that, at the moment of his death, the hands of the clock stood at exactly five o'clock!"

"Five o'clock," cried Dorsi. "Then the attendant had not yet returned!"

"Before he came back on that unfortunate visit to his room," said A. B. C. solemnly, "the professor was already dead."

"But nobody else had entered the laboratory," I objected.

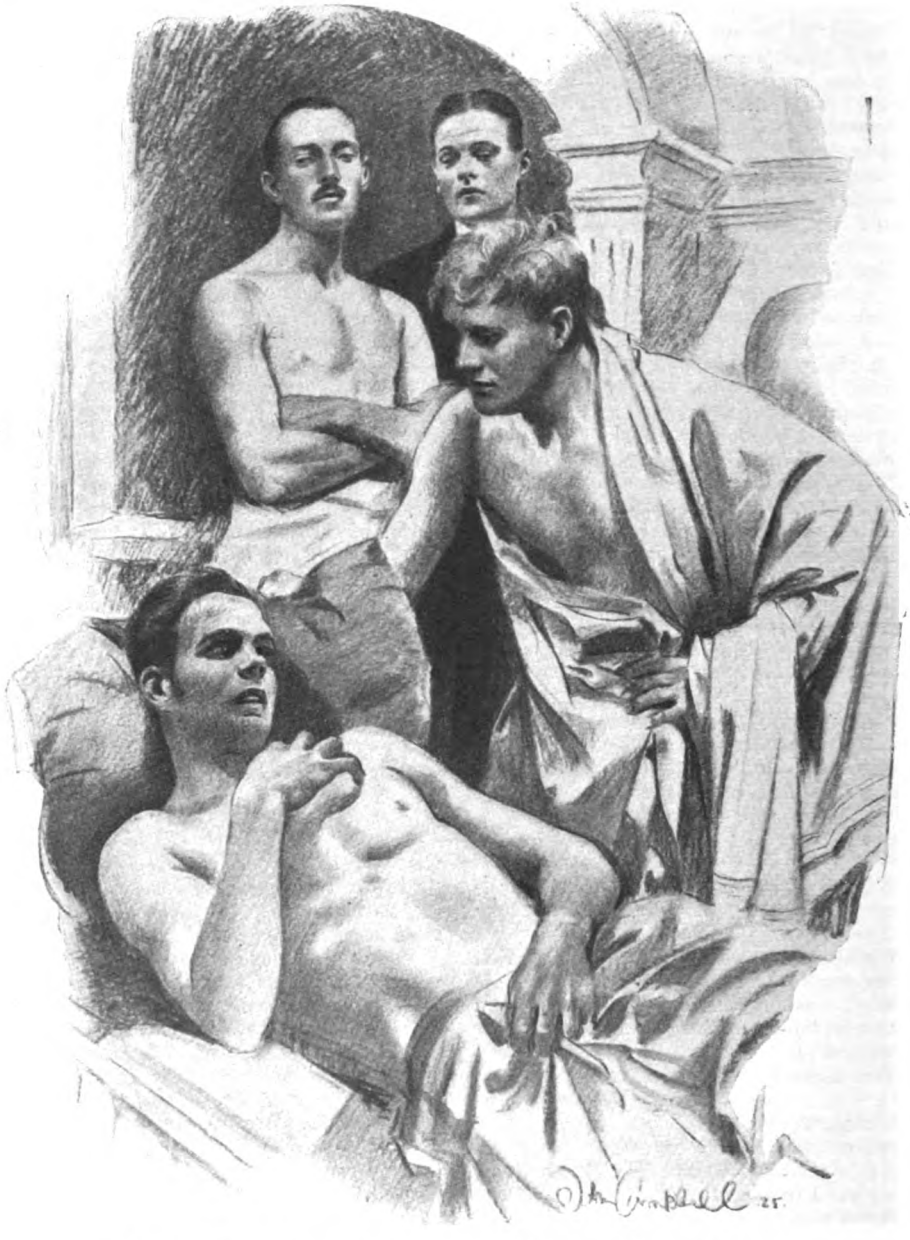
"And nobody had!" said A. B. C. "That's what made me so curious about the game of *cottabos*. You see, a really skilled player, standing in the corridor with the proper kind of glass, might well throw the poison through the barred window into the filter. It would be difficult, I admit, but a practised hand could achieve it. The professor at his desk would not notice the liquid passing across the room."

A choking sound came from the slab where Lavorello lay. He was gasping as if unable to draw his breath. A. B. C. strode across to him and spoke softly but distinctly in his ear, while Dorsi and I watched with a terrible suspicion in our minds.

"Lavorello," said Hawkes, sternly, "*you* understand!"

The young scientist groaned and fought for air. Then a sudden agitation of his body threw him off the slab on to the floor. Dorsi and I rushed to raise him, but A. B. C. waved us back.

"It's too late," he said. "I knew his



**Hawkes strode across to him, while Dorsi and I watched with a terrible suspicion in our minds.**

heart was weak—he was foolish to use these hot rooms. The heat of the bath, the strain of his recent crime, and the knowledge that it had been detected have killed him. I must confess that this was my reason for staging this little scene here. We may now be able to avert a very nasty scandal; whereas, if it had come to a public trial——" He shook his head. "Yes, he was a great experimenter, was young Lavorello, but his ambition was too great for him. A true scientist should await results, not force them, even when a stupid, vain old man stands in the way."

**A True Account of a Great Triumph**

# HOW IT FEELS TO BE BLIND

By

## J. MACRAE

*ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE*

ON July 4th, 1923, there was a dinner to which I went with the keenest anticipation. It was a gathering of the old friends of the long trail, the trail that leads round the world. Big Bill was the excuse for the dinner; he had just returned from his longest and most adventurous journey, the one on which he had traversed the northern tributaries of the Amazon and emerged through Venezuela. Bradstreet also was with us, now a conservative and prosperous banker who capitalized his years of banking in the China coast settlements and had become an authority on Eastern exchange and finance. Warren, author and war correspondent, had come with his friend, Dr. May, who had been an intimate of Bradstreet's ever since their early days in China. There were eight of us altogether, and we sat by a window overlooking the wonderful river of moving vehicles which is Fifth Avenue. An orchestra played in an adjoining room.

Mr. J. Macrae.

As the dinner progressed it seemed to me that the lights were not so bright as they had been. A newspaper clipping was passed round the table in connection with something that Big Bill had said. When it reached me, I could read the heading only—not the text, and passed it along, remarking that I would have to see about my glasses soon, as it was not so easy to read by electric light. Jeffcoat, on my right, rumbled out, in his deep voice, that we were none of us so young as we used to be, and that was how I felt about it, too.

When the time came for us to leave I noticed a cloud between me and the big cluster of lights at the entrance. I brushed my hand over my eyes, but it would not brush away.

I did not recognize what it meant, but an unexpected guest had arrived for me. It was blindness.

AT first it was unbelievable; it simply could not be true. And then suddenly my impulse was to fight like mad. I am fortunate in having in this city a friend from childhood who is a distinguished ear specialist. I telephoned him at once and he got busy on my behalf. Ten minutes later I was on my way to consultation with an eye specialist. He made a careful examination of my eyes and sent me off to another eye specialist, from whom he said he wished to have a second opinion, and to whom he telephoned. They reported to my friend direct, and that evening he called me up and told me the programme he had made out for me. I might say here that my friend was about to start on a holiday trip to South America; and I shall never forget the

perfectly wonderful feeling that came over me when I heard he had cancelled his trip and was staying in New York to see me through.

The next few days I followed his programme. I was sent to a diagnostician, who X-rayed me, analysed and tested, and charted me like a problem in science. Other doctors made photographs of my head and teeth. Then there was a consultation at my friend's house, where my charts and data were assembled, scrutinized, and discussed. I was advised to have this, that, and the other thing done, and all the suggestions were faithfully carried out. However, as the weeks drew into months, it became apparent that nothing was being accomplished so far as restoration of sight was concerned. There had been so much to attend to that my attention had been greatly diverted from myself. Now I began to try to face complete readjustment. I realized that I was blind, and alone in a New York hotel.

Active business had been dropped. Life had to be rearranged; limitations and inhibitions made themselves felt; liberty was greatly curtailed. My reading depended upon others; it was unwise to attempt to go out alone.

Then came the time of my spirit, when deliberately I covered my thoughts, ambitions (for I am not too old to have them), and hopes in a complete pall of intense inward concentration of adjustment, like the darkness into which we thrust some plants to force a timed growth upon them.

I was doing very well, I thought—balances were adjusting, one desire after another was suppressed, one habit after another changed. I, who had been active, came to be able to sit for hours alone with the thoughts that had some light in them. I could get from my ears and my touch the beginnings of compensation. I felt I was going to be a creditable blind man.

Then suddenly I was robbed of my victories, plunged back into hopelessness with all the fight to do over again, by a brief glimpse of light—brightness, golden glittering in the sunset.

I was walking down Fifth Avenue in the shadow of sightlessness when suddenly there came one of those unaccountable restorations of vision that are a curse of early blindness. I clutched the arm of the friend with whom I was walking, stopped, and pointed.

"You can see?" he asked. "What?"

"The cock," I whispered, "the golden cock."

It was the cock on the Hechscher building I had seen for just one glimpse, a derisive moment. Then I had to start all over again.

WHEN human skill has done its utmost without avail, where can one turn except to a merciful God? I tried to achieve a living faith, to draw on the power which made the blind to see and the lame to walk. I knelt before the altar and asked for help. I asked that my sight be restored. Through dark days and sleepless nights I poured out my soul to God.

A great healer came here and held a service in one of the ancient churches, and laid the hands of faith on the maimed, the sick, and the blind. A friend heard of it and took me there. It was a very strange experience. When we got there, the church was crowded to the side-walk and the police were keeping order in the aisles. There was no semblance of a regular church service; everyone was talking at once. The clergy behind the chancel rail were trying to lead the congregation in a hymn. Somebody said, "Here's a blind man."

One came forward and said, "Do you wish to be healed?" The crowd parted and I found myself face to face with the healer. He asked me a few brief questions, paused, prayed, and placed his hands upon my head, and in a very earnest voice said:—

"In the name of Jesus Christ, receive your sight."

I felt as if I had got an electric shock. I was led out of the church and we sat down on a bench under the trees in the quiet oasis of green with the roar of the city all around us. I was physically tired, almost spent, and had no inclination to do anything but rest. We remained there probably half an hour and then went quietly home. I am told that I sat down on a chair and fell asleep with my hat and stick in my hand.

Power was there, but it did not benefit me.

I met the manager of a large New York hotel one day, whom I had known for some years. On parting, he said to me: "You may be surprised, but I never go to sleep without saying my prayers, and I have prayed for you ever since you had your trouble."

Someone brought me Basil King's "Conquest of Fear" and read it to me. . . . A lady sent word to say she had placed my name on the list of a prayer group, and that I would be remembered by them individually and in their prayer meetings. . . . Help has not yet come from these efforts in the way I hoped, but it may still. If nothing else, at least they lifted me out of myself and tided me over a very rough place.

My friends began calling to my attention various hopes of relief. Several spoke to me about Christian Science. Three different people brought me a long and very interesting

"On seeing my condition the man stepped back, saying: "I'm sorry—it's me should be helping you."

article in a magazine describing cures by faith effected through the Nazarene group. One day I came across papers on my table which on investigation proved to be a description of and leaflets pertaining to cures of blindness through the relics of St. Theresa at Buffalo. Where these came from I never knew. A newspaper clipping was brought to me regarding the cures for blindness which were reported to have been effected by a certain doctor in Russia, but for a time there seemed to be no way to check the truth of the story. Later, when sitting with a group of friends, one of the ladies spoke of a Russian doctor, Director of Public Health in one of the large cities, who had recently visited here. A letter to this doctor speedily brought a report which said that many of the patients said they could see, but only two could count the fingers of a hand held up before them. I have a packet of clippings about reported cures by various means, from injections to eye-grafting, and just as surely as a clipping comes along, so surely do I investigate it.

My friend the doctor said one night that he expected I would "try everything once."

When I began to go out and about, I found New York a changed city, inhabited by another sort of people. The push and drive which were so obvious in former days are no longer apparent. Everywhere courtesy and good fellowship prevail. On public conveyances a seat can always be found. The "Step lively, please," is changed into "Take your time," and a helping hand is extended. Traffic police are never too busy to safeguard a crossing; and even amusing incidents occur. Late one evening, while I was waiting outside a store into which my escort had gone to make some purchase, a man came up with the usual request for some money to get a bed; but instantly, on seeing my condition, he stepped back, saying: "I'm sorry—it's me should be helping you."

There is a great deal of kindness in New York.

Very soon after blindness came upon me I began to notice that I was inexplicably happy. It has been hard to understand. Here was a complete and sudden and drastic change of life. My occupations and diversions were gone. I was compelled to lie for hours in darkness and unwonted idleness, to realize that I had dropped from the ranks, and that the world would henceforth march on without me. Yet I was happy. It was a kind of spiritual exaltation, a lofty serenity—aloof and above and beyond the trials and tribulations of daily life. Perhaps

it may be accounted for by the greatness of the calamity which had overtaken me. Like a flood, it swept away all minor troubles and vexations, and while it has raised a lot of new problems, there seems to be an assurance that they will be met and overcome in due course. At the same time, it has solved and abolished many others. It seems in so many ways to clarify life: many of the less essential things are shorn away and a simpler, more regular, less complicated life remains. Many of the harsher and less agreeable things have been shut out, and I have time to learn to contemplate. Some things which formerly appeared to be of great importance in the scheme of things are now found to have little or no value after all. New interests open out, new values are discovered, and a new scheme of life is gradually unfolding itself as days go on.

One would naturally think that there would be grave cause to worry—to have anxiety over the future which has to be faced, but worry simply has not come. There is some anodyne, some soothing balm, some strength of mind which enables me to face the future with a confidence and a serenity which cannot now be disturbed. It is not resignation, or indifference, or fatalism, or contentment, for I have not given up the fight, nor ever will.

I have just heard one of New York's most eminent oculists declare my case hopeless, and it did not give me a pang. Perhaps it is because I don't believe him. I cannot give up the hope that some way will be found to give me sight. But even as it is, life is very interesting, and there is a lot to be done yet.

I have been told that blind people are often very happy and good-natured. Certainly I have met some lately to whom that description would apply. It may be a compensation given by a kindly Providence, and, if so, it is a very merciful dispensation.

Someone has said, "Save me from my friends." But my friends do not come under that category. They have been perfectly wonderful to me. They have helped me more than words can tell. They still treat me as one of themselves, as if nothing had happened to me. They even send me photographs and picture postcards, and I consider that a gracious and delicate attention towards one who cannot see.

When I have attempted to discuss blindness with people, I have many times felt as if I had come to a tight-shut door. It is remarkable, but none the less true, that one meets an age-old, static state of mind regarding it. It is looked upon as being as final and irrevocable as death. Yet among my friends there is a beauty of consideration which helps to soften the immobility of their ideas about blindness.

A man naturally craves companionship, but a blind man must be perceptive enough not to bore people, and not to expect more than they can give. It is therefore of the greatest importance to be able to estimate how far a friend is able to go. And so, perhaps what I value most in my friends is truth and sincerity.

I can no longer readily seek people out: they have to come to me. They bring interesting people to me—a man who tells me what he has just seen in Russia; another who has made a voyage of twelve thousand miles during which he saw only one vessel under sail. They tell me about the plays they see, and I have heard it remarked that when a group talks over a play in my presence the discussion is more lively than usual because each makes an effort at visualization for me. They read books to my taste—travel and biography principally; and articles from magazines.

THE most trying part of being blind—stone-blind, as it is popularly called—is the complete and irremediable sense of isolation. Sight is probably the sense which means more to us than any other. Through the eyes we get our ideas of the world around us and of the size and relation of one thing to another—colour and light and shade, the glory of the day, the beauty of a moonlight night.

A great part of our communication with other people is carried on by the eyes; sometimes alone—more often as an adjunct of speech and hearing. Normally our senses function together so harmoniously that we do not stop to think of how they act, or their interdependent relations. We just use them.

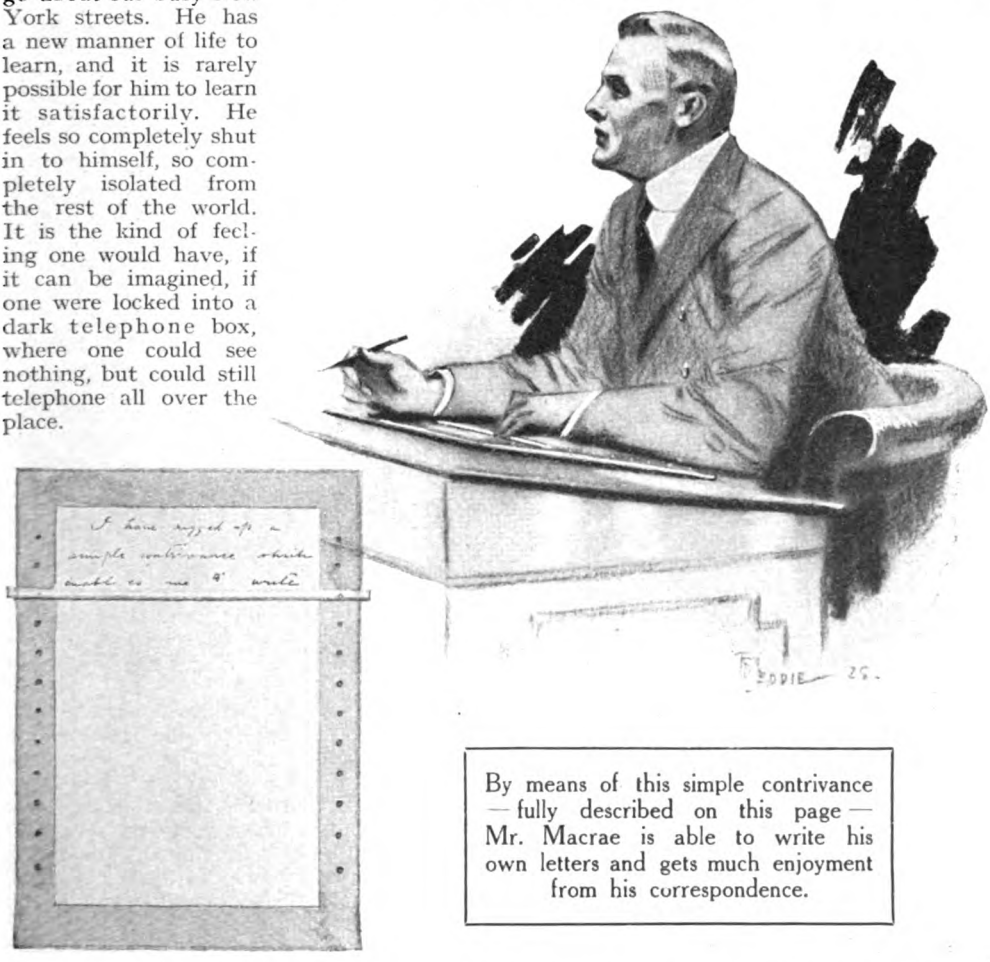
But it is a strange sensation to stand up in the centre of a crowd of people—to know that hundreds of men and women are round you, some of them almost touching you, and yet you cannot see them. It is a nerve-racking experience at first, even though one is conscious of the real friendliness of the people.

This probably is one of the sensations which come only to those who lose their sight in later years, and not to those who were always blind. To such as have never known vision, the world and all they know of it is a world of their own in which they live, move, and function normally. They find nothing strange in it, for they have been accustomed to it all their lives, and to no different conditions.

There was a man who first got his sight through an operation performed when he was over thirty. He lived in a little home

in the country which had a garden he had made his hobby for years. He was able to find anything in his garden and to go down to the store and do his own errands. When he came home with his seeing eyes, he was quite lost. He knew it all in the dark, but he had to learn it all over again by daylight.

A person who loses his sight late in life is not likely to be able to acquire the fearless facility with which so many of the blind go about our busy New York streets. He has a new manner of life to learn, and it is rarely possible for him to learn it satisfactorily. He feels so completely shut in to himself, so completely isolated from the rest of the world. It is the kind of feeling one would have, if it can be imagined, if one were locked into a dark telephone box, where one could see nothing, but could still telephone all over the place.



By means of this simple contrivance — fully described on this page — Mr. Macrae is able to write his own letters and gets much enjoyment from his correspondence.

I HAVE rigged up a simple contrivance which enables me to write my own letters, and I get a great deal of enjoyment from correspondence. There is time to cultivate the art of letter-writing, and I have found some new and valued friends. I got an ordinary school slate large enough to carry a typewriting pad on its surface inside the frame, and had a row of pegs put along each side of the frame half an inch apart. A thin wooden bar lies across the pegs and pad. This serves as a guide by which I can write a straight line across the pad. Then I lift the bar to the next two pegs and write the next line. By this means I can write a legible letter without the danger of the lines crossing each other. With practice, I have gained sufficient confidence to send a letter out without its being edited. At first I was apt to double or triple a final "e"—unconsciously—and a word like "will" usually had several "l's," but that was only a beginner's enthusiasm, and has since been curbed. Sometimes all the letters of a word got piled one on top of the other because my hand did not move as fast as my thoughts.

It was a great lift to me when I discovered, after an abstinence of several months, that I could write letters again that my friends liked to read. It might be likened in a small degree to a dumb man getting his speech again.

I have a certain temerity about using the

typewriter owing to the fact that one cannot see what has been written, and consequently would not know if one started off on the wrong key, or forgot to lift the carriage, or if there were an accident to the ribbon. I can more or less guard against such accidents in writing by hand. I intend to take up typing later, but meanwhile am learning Braille. That is enough at one time.

Someone suggested a wireless set. This did not greatly appeal to me at first, but it was not long before I found it one of my greatest pleasures. Then one night I listened in to a demonstration of broadcasting given by General Carty from Chicago. The whole country was for the first time linked together within the sound of one man's voice. This gave me the thrill of my life. We heard the "Meditation" from "Thaïs" played on a violin in Havana, and "Home, Sweet Home" played on the chimes in San Francisco. We discovered it was warmer that night in Denver, Colorado, than in Jacksonville, Florida.

Memory and imagination stirred as I followed the answering voices from sunny, tropical Cuba, through Florida, the Carolinas, and Virginia to Pittsburg—to busy Chicago, out across the snow-covered prairies to the City of the Latter-Day Saints; up the slopes of the Rockies to Denver—to Nevada, and down to the balmy shores of the Pacific. I reached San Francisco breathless and excited, as if I had been running all the way.

I had crossed the Continent so often that I could visualize most of the places on the line. I could hear the roar of traffic on Market Street, San Francisco, and the never-ceasing wash of the surf on the Cuban beaches. To me, a prisoner, it was freedom again—the freedom to travel, and meet men and women, and see cities and mountains, and ships at sea silhouetted against the sky as they pass across the horizon.

There can be no doubt that wireless brings the shut-in person more in touch with the world of actuality and activity than anything else. Lectures make up for some of the reading one cannot do (and misses so much), and there is a great deal of good music to be heard in a city like New York. Everything from church services to jazz is there, and often there is a surprising selection from which to choose. It is a great tribute to the generous heart of America to know that a movement has been put on foot to extend radio service "to all prisoners and captives, and those who sit in darkness."

My occupations have carried me into many countries and into contact with all kinds of people. That is a wonderful help. Many pictures hang in the halls of memory, and looking at these gives great satisfaction. Strangely, one of my most vivid pictures is of a picture.

I was visiting a country house in Scotland, an old grey stone house. I was sitting at the table in the dining-room. The sinking sun was shining through the broad window at my back. By chance I looked up and saw the picture hanging on the opposite wall over the head of my host. The sun shone full on it—and there again was the feeling of the open spaces, the wide sea, the fresh winds of heaven. I was standing on a beach; a boat was being rowed towards me to take me off to my ship. I knew it was my ship, my boat, my men; and the ships were in the bay, their anchors apeak, their topsails loosed ready to hoist and sheet home; high-pooped ships with stern lanterns, and carvings about their bows and stern galleries. We were bound—where to? The Celebes—the Spice Islands—New Amsterdam. All the seas were open to us, and we were outward bound; that was all that mattered.

A quiet "What are you looking at?" brought my eyes down to see the amused smile on the face of my host.

"That picture," I said.

"Well, what of it?"

"It reminds me of one I saw in the Glasgow Galleries by a Dutch artist. It gives the same impression of the open air—of clear horizons ever receding, of ships putting to sea."

"That's it," he said; "the same artist—Van der Velde—one of the best marine painters of his day. About the middle of the seventeenth century."

There are many pictures in my gallery of memories. Mountains—the Three Sisters in the Canadian Rockies seen across the prairies in a summer sunrise; Fujiyama at sunset; Shasta with a snowstorm swirling about it like a fleecy wrap around a beautiful woman's shoulders; the giants of the Andes, serene in their majestic loneliness; cherry blossoms in Japan; the Klondike rush, and many others.

Last year I received a bronze Buddha from Japan. More recently, a deep-sea friend of mine brought me an ebony elephant from Calcutta. It's not so bad, after all—there's a great deal to remember and think over; and friends come in, and we talk of men and books, and politics, and religion, and women, and what we found on Picayune Creek. And on my table, all the while, Buddha sits in meditation.

# Keeping in with Vosper

By

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

THE young man in the heather-mixture plus fours, who for some time had been pacing the terrace above the ninth green like an imprisoned jaguar, flung himself into a chair and uttered a snort of anguish.

"Women," said the young man, "are the limit."

The Oldest Member, ever ready to sympathize with youth in affliction, turned a courteous ear.

"What," he inquired, "has the sex been pulling on you now?"

"My wife is the best little woman in the world."

"I can readily believe it."

"But," continued the young man, "I would like to bean her with a brick, and bean her good. I told her, when she wanted to play a round with me this afternoon, that we must start early, as the days are drawing in. What did she do? Having got into her things, she decided that she didn't like the look of them and made a complete change. She then powdered her nose for ten minutes. And when finally I got her on to the first tee, an hour late, she went back into the club-house to 'phone to her dressmaker. It will be dark before we've played six holes. If I had my way, golf-clubs would make a rigid rule that no wife be allowed to play with her husband."

The Oldest Member nodded gravely.

"Until this is done," he agreed, "the millennium cannot but be set back indefinitely. Although we are told nothing about it, there can be little doubt that one of Job's chief trials was that his wife insisted on playing golf with him. And, as we are on this topic, it may interest you to hear a story."

"I have no time to listen to stories now."

"If your wife is telephoning to her dressmaker, you have ample time," replied the Sage. "The story which I am about to relate deals with a man named Bradbury Fisher——"

"You told me that one."

"I think not."

"Yes, you did. Bradbury Fisher was a Wall Street millionaire who had an English butler named Blizzard, who had been ten years with an earl. Another millionaire coveted Blizzard, and they played a match for him, and Fisher lost. But, just as he was wondering how he could square himself with his wife, who valued Blizzard very highly, Mrs. Fisher turned up from England with a still finer butler named Vosper, who had been fifteen years with a duke. So all ended happily."

"Yes," said the Sage. "You appear to have the facts correctly. The tale which I am about to relate is a sequel to that story, and runs as follows:—

YOU say (began the Oldest Member) that all ended happily. That was Bradbury Fisher's opinion, too. It seemed to Bradbury in the days that followed Vosper's taking of office as though Providence, recognizing his sterling merits, had gone out of its way to smooth the path of life for him. The weather was fine; his handicap, after remaining stationary for many years, had begun to decrease; and his old friend Rupert Worple had just come out of Sing-Sing, where he had been taking a post-graduate course, and was paying him a pleasant visit at his house in Goldenville, Long Island.

The only thing, in fact, that militated against Bradbury's complete tranquillity was the information he had just received from his wife that her mother, Mrs. Lora Smith Maplebury, was about to infest the home for an indeterminate stay.

Bradbury had never liked his wives' mothers. His first wife, he recalled, had had a particularly objectionable mother. So had his second, third, and fourth. And the present holder of the title appeared to him to be scratch. She had a habit of sniffing in a significant way whenever she looked at him, and this can never make for a spirit

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of easy comradeship between man and woman. Given a free hand, he would have tied a brick to her neck and dropped her in the water-hazard at the second; but, realizing that this was but a Utopian dream, he sensibly decided to make the best of things and to content himself with jumping out of window whenever she came into a room in which he happened to be sitting.

His mood, therefore, as he sat in his Louis Quinze library on the evening on which this story opens, was perfectly contented. And when there was a knock at the door and Vosper entered, no foreboding came to warn him that the quiet peace of his life was about to be shattered.

"Might I have a word, sir?" said the butler.

"Certainly, Vosper. What is it?"

Bradbury Fisher beamed upon the man. For the hundredth time, as he eyed him, he reflected how immeasurably superior he was to the departed Blizzard. Blizzard had been ten years with an earl, and no one disputes that earls are all very well in their way. But they are not dukes. About a butler who has served in a ducal household there is a something which cannot be duplicated by one who has passed the formative years of his butlerhood in humbler surroundings.

"It has to do with Mr. Worple, sir."

"What about him?"

"Mr. Worple," said the butler, gravely, "must go. I do not like his laugh, sir."

"Eh?"

"It is too hearty, sir. It would not have done for the Duke."

Bradbury Fisher was an easy-going man, but he belonged to a free race. For freedom his fathers had fought and, if he had heard the story correctly, bled. His eyes flashed.

"Oh!" he cried. "Oh, indeed!"

"Yes, sir."

"Is zat so?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let me tell you something, Bill——"

"My name is Hildebrand, sir."

"Well, let me tell you, whatever your scarlet name is, that no butler is going to boss me in my own home. You can darned well go yourself."

"Very good, sir."

Vosper withdrew like an ambassador who has received his papers; and presently there was a noise without like hens going through a hedge, and Mrs. Fisher plunged in.

"Bradbury," she cried, "are you mad? Of course Mr. Worple must go if Vosper says so. Don't you realize that Vosper will leave us if we don't humour him?"

"I should worry about him leaving!"

A strange, set look came into Mrs. Fisher's face.

"Bradbury," she said, "if Vosper leaves us, I shall die. And, what is more, just before dying I shall get a divorce. Yes, I will."

Bradbury gasped. He loved this woman, and her threat seemed to stop the beating of his heart. That she could fulfil it, he did not doubt for an instant. There was not a jury in the whole of America that would not give her a decree on the grounds of inhuman and intolerable cruelty. His first wife had divorced him on far less substantial grounds. So had his second, third, and fourth.

"But, darling," he gasped. "Rupert Worple! Old Rupie Worple! We've been friends all our lives."

"I don't care."

"We were freshers at Sing-Sing together."

"I don't care. Heaven has sent me the perfect butler, and I'm not going to lose him."

There was a tense silence.

"Ah, well!" said Bradbury Fisher with a deep sigh.

That night he broke the news to Rupert Worple.

"I never thought," said Rupert Worple sadly, "when we sang together on the glee-club at the old Alma Mater, that it would ever come to this."

"Nor I," said Bradbury Fisher. "But so it must be. You wouldn't have done for the Duke, Rupie, you wouldn't have done for the Duke."

"Good-bye, Number 8,097,564," said Rupert Worple in a low voice.

"Good-bye, Number 8,097,565," whispered Bradbury Fisher.

And with a silent hand-clasp the two friends parted.

WITH the going of Rupert Worple a grey cloud seemed to settle upon the glowing radiance of Bradbury Fisher's life. Mrs. Lora Smith Maplebury duly arrived; and, having given a series of penetrating sniffs as he greeted her in the entrance-hall, dug herself in and settled down to what looked like the visit of a lifetime. And then, just as Bradbury's cup seemed to be full to overflowing, Mrs. Fisher drew him aside one evening.

"Bradbury," said Mrs. Fisher, "I have some good news for you."

"Is your mother leaving?" asked Bradbury eagerly.

"Of course not. I said good news. I am taking up golf again."

Bradbury Fisher clutched at the arms of his chair, and an ashen pallor spread itself over his clean-cut face.

"What did you say?" he muttered.

"I'm taking up golf again. Won't it be

nice? We'll be able to play together every day."

Bradbury Fisher shuddered strongly. It was many years since he had played with his wife, but, like an old wound, the memory of it still troubled him occasionally.

"It was Vosper's idea."

"Vosper!"

"I think it's so nice of him, Bradbury. It shows he has our interests at heart, just like a faithful old retainer. He says wheezing is an indication of heightened blood-pressure and can be remedied by gentle exercise. So we'll have our first round to-morrow morning, shall we?"

"Just as you say," said Bradbury dully. "I had a sort of date to make one of a foursome with three men at the club, but——"

"Oh, you don't want to play with those silly men any more. It will be much nicer, just you and I playing together."

"Mr. Worple," said the butler, gravely, "must go. I do not like his laugh, sir."

IT has always seemed to me a strange and unaccountable thing that nowadays, when gloom is at such a premium in the world's literature and all around us stern young pessimists are bringing home the bacon with their studies in the greyly grim, no writer has thought of turning his pen to a realistic portrayal of the golfing wife. No subject could be more poignant, and yet it has been completely neglected. One can only suppose that even modern novelists feel that the line should be drawn somewhere.

A sudden seething fury gripped Bradbury. This pestilent butler was an absolute home-wrecker. He toyed with the idea of poisoning Vosper's port. Surely, if he were to do so, a capable lawyer could smooth things over and get him off with at the worst a nominal fine.

"Vosper says I need exercise. He says he does not like my wheezing."

"Your what?"

"My wheezing. I do wheeze, you know."

"Well, so does he."

"Yes, but a good butler is expected to wheeze. A wheezing woman is quite a different thing. My wheezing would never have done for the Duke, Vosper says."

Bradbury Fisher breathed tensely.

"Ha!" he said.

Bradbury Fisher's emotions, as he stood by the first tee watching his wife prepare to drive off, were far beyond my poor powers to describe. This was the woman he loved, and she was behaving in a manner that made the iron sink deep into his soul.

Most women golfers are elaborate wagglers, but none that Bradbury had ever seen

had made quite such a set of Swedish exercises out of the simple act of laying the club-head behind the ball and raising it over the right shoulder. For fully a minute, it seemed to him, Mrs. Fisher fiddled and pawed at the ball; while Bradbury, realizing that there are eighteen tees on a course and that this Russian Ballet stuff was consequently going to happen at least seventeen times more, quivered in agony and clenched his hands till the knuckles stood out white under the strain. Then she drove, and the ball trickled down the hill into a patch of rough some five yards distant.

"Tee-hee!" said Mrs. Fisher.

Bradbury uttered a sharp cry. He was married to a golfing giggler.

"What did I do then?"

"God help you, woman," said Bradbury, "you jerked your head up till I wonder it didn't come off at the neck."

It was at the fourth hole that further evidence was afforded the wretched man of how utterly a good, pure woman may change her nature when once she gets out on the links. Mrs. Fisher had played her eleventh, and, having walked the intervening three yards, was about to play her twelfth when behind them, grouped upon the tee, Bradbury perceived two of his fellow-members of the club. Remorse and shame pierced him.

"One minute, honey," he said. "We'd better let these men through."

"What men?"

"We're holding up a couple of fellows. I'll wave to them."

"You will do nothing of the sort," cried Mrs. Fisher. "The idea!"

"But, darling——"

"Why should they go through us? We started before them."

"But, pettie——"

"They shall not pass!" said Mrs. Fisher. And, raising her mashie, she dug a grim divot out of the shrinking turf. With bowed head, Bradbury followed her on the long, long trail.

The sun was sinking as they came at last to journey's end.

"How right Vosper is!" said Mrs. Fisher, nestling into the cushions of the car. "I feel ever so much better already."

"Do you?" said Bradbury wanly. "Do you?"

"We'll play again to-morrow afternoon," said his wife.

BRADBURY FISHER was a man of steel. He endured for a week. But on the last day of the week Mrs. Fisher insisted on taking as a companion on the round Alfred, her pet Airedale. In vain Bradbury spoke of the Green Committee and their prejudice against dogs on the links. Mrs. Fisher said that the Green Committee were a lot of silly, fussy old men, and she had no patience with them.

So Alfred came along—barking at Bradbury as he endeavoured to concentrate on the smooth pronation of the wrists, bounding ahead to frolic round distant players who were shaping for delicate chip-shots, and getting a deep toe-hold on the turf of each successive green. Hell, felt Bradbury, must be something like this; and he wished that he had led a better life.

But that retribution which waits on all, both small and great, who defy Green Committees had marked Alfred down. Taking up a position just behind Mrs. Fisher as she began her down swing on the seventh, he received so shrewd a blow on his right foreleg that with a sharp yelp he broke into a gallop, raced through a foursome on the sixth green, and, charging across country, dived headlong into the water-hazard on the second; where he remained until Bradbury, who had been sent in pursuit, waded in and fished him out.

Mrs. Fisher came panting up, full of concern.

"What shall we do? The poor little fellow is quite lame, I know. You can carry him, Bradbury."

Bradbury Fisher uttered a low, bleating sound. The water had had the worst effect on the animal. Even when dry, Alfred was always a dog of powerful scent. Wet, he had become definitely one of the six best smellers. His aroma had what the advertisement-writers call "strong memory-value."

"Carry him? To the car, do you mean?"

"Of course not. Round the links. I don't want to miss a day's golf. You can put him down when you play your shots."

For a long instant Bradbury hesitated. The words "Is zat so?" trembled on his lips.

"Very well," he said, swallowing twice.

THAT night, in his du Barri bedroom, Bradbury Fisher lay sleepless far into the dawn. A crisis, he realized, had come in his domestic affairs. Things, he saw clearly, could not go on like this. It was not merely the awful spiritual agony of playing these daily rounds of golf with his wife that was so hard to endure. The real trouble was that the spectacle of her on the links was destroying his ideals, sapping away that love and respect which should have been as imperishable as steel.

To a good man his wife should be a goddess, a being far above him to whom he can offer worship and reverence, a beacon-star guiding him over the tossing seas of life. She should be ever on a pedestal and

Even when dry, Alfred was always a dog of powerful scent. Wet, he had become definitely one of the six best smellers.

in a shrine. And when she waggles for a minute and a half and then jerks her head and tops the ball, she ceases to be so. And Mrs. Fisher was not merely a head-lifter and a super-waggler; she was a scoffer at Golf's most sacred things. She held up scratch-men. She omitted to replace divots. She spoke lightly of Green Committees.

The sun was gilding Goldenville in its morning glory when Bradbury made up his mind. He would play with her no more. To do so would be fair neither to himself nor to her. At any moment, he felt, she might come out on the links in high heels or stop to powder her nose on the green while frenzied foursomes waited to play their approach-shots. And then love would turn to hate, and he and she would go through life estranged. Better to end it now, while he still retained some broken remains of the old esteem.

He had got everything neatly arranged. He would plead business in the City and sneak off each day to play on another course five miles away.

"Darling," he said at breakfast, "I'm afraid we sha'n't be able to have our game for a week or so. I shall have to be at the office early and late."

"Oh, what a shame!" said Mrs. Fisher.

"You will, no doubt, be able to get a game with the pro or somebody. You know how bitterly this disappoints me. I had come to look on our daily round as the bright spot of the day. But business is business."

"I thought you had retired from business," said Mrs. Lora Smith Maplebury, with a sniff that cracked a coffee-cup.

Bradbury Fisher looked at her coldly. She was a lean, pale-eyed woman with high cheek-bones, and for the hundredth time since she had come into his life he felt how intensely she needed a punch on the nose.

"Not altogether," he said. "I still retain large interests in this and that, and I am at the moment occupied with affairs which I cannot mention without revealing secrets which might—which would—which are—— Well, anyway, I've got to go to the office."

"Oh, quite," said Mrs. Maplebury.

"What do you mean, quite?" demanded Bradbury.

"I mean just what I say. Quite!"

"Why quite?"

"Why not quite? I suppose I can say 'Quite!' can't I?"

"Oh, quite," said Bradbury.

He kissed his wife and left the room. He felt a little uneasy. There had been something in the woman's manner which had caused him a vague foreboding.

Had he been able to hear the conversation that followed his departure, he would have been still more uneasy.

"Suspicious!" said Mrs. Maplebury.

"What is?" asked Mrs. Fisher.

"That man's behaviour."

"What do you mean?"

"Did you observe him closely while he was speaking?"

"No."

"The tip of his nose wiggled. Always distrust a man who wiggles the tip of his nose."

"I am sure Bradbury would not deceive you."

"So am I. But he might try to."

"I don't understand, mother. Do you mean you think Bradbury is not going to the office?"

"I am sure he is not."

"You think——?"

"I do."

"You are suggesting——?"

"I am."

"You would imply——?"

"I would."

A moan escaped Mrs. Fisher.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she cried. "If I thought Bradbury was untrue to me, what I wouldn't do to that poor clam!"

"I certainly think that the least you can do, as a good womanly woman, is to have a capable lawyer watching your interests."

"But we can easily find out if he is at the office. We can ring them up on the 'phone and ask."

"And be told that he is in conference. He will not have neglected to arrange for that."

"Then what shall I do?"

"Wait," said Mrs. Maplebury. "Wait and be watchful."

THE shades of night were falling when Bradbury returned to his home. He was fatigued but jubilant. He had played forty-five holes in the society of his own sex. He had kept his head down and his eye on the ball. He had sung negro spirituals in the locker-room.

"I trust, Bradbury," said Mrs. Maplebury, "that you are not tired after your long day?"

"A little," said Bradbury. "Nothing to signify." He turned radiantly to his wife. "Honey," he said, "you remember the trouble I was having with my iron? Well, to-day——"

He stopped aghast. Like every good husband it had always been his practice hitherto to bring his golfing troubles to his wife, and in many a cosy after-dinner chat he had confided to her the difficulty he was having in keeping his iron-shots straight. And he had only just stopped himself now

from telling her that to-day he had been hitting 'em sweetly on the meat right down the middle.

"Your iron?"

"Er—ah—yes. I have large interests in Iron—as also in Steel, Jute, Woollen Fabrics, and Consolidated Peanuts. A gang has been trying to hammer down my stock. To-day I fixed them."

"You did, did you?" said Mrs. Maplebury.

"I said I did," retorted Bradbury, defiantly.

"So did I. I said you did, did you?"

"What do you mean, did you?"

"Well, you did, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"Exactly what I said. You did. Didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"Yes, you did!" said Mrs. Maplebury.

Once again Bradbury felt vaguely uneasy.

SUCH, then, was the position of affairs in the Fisher home. And now that I have arrived thus far in my story and have shown you this man systematically deceiving the woman he had vowed—at one of the most exclusive altars in New York—to love and cherish, you—if you are the sort of husband I hope you are—must be

**"I thought you had retired from business," said Mrs. Lora Smith Maplebury, with a sniff that cracked a coffee-cup.**

There was nothing in the actual dialogue which had just taken place to cause him alarm—indeed, considered purely as dialogue, it was bright and snappy and well calculated to make things gay about the home. But once more there had been a subtle something in his mother-in-law's manner which had jarred upon him. He mumbled and went off to dress for dinner.

"Ha!" said Mrs. Maplebury, as the door closed.

saying to yourself: "But what of Bradbury Fisher's conscience?" Remorse, you feel, must long since have begun to gnaw at his vitals; and the thought suggests itself to you that surely by this time the pangs of self-reproach must have interfered seriously with his short game, even if not as yet sufficiently severe to affect his driving off the tee.

You are overlooking the fact that Bradbury Fisher's was the trained and educated

conscience of a man who had passed a large portion of his life in Wall Street; and years of practice had enabled him to reduce the control of it to a science. Many a time in the past, when an active operator on the Street, he had done things to the small investor which would have caused raised eyebrows in the fo'c'sle of a pirate sloop—and done them without a blush. He was not the man, therefore, to suffer torment merely because he was slipping one over on the Little Woman.

Occasionally he would wince a trifle at the thought of what would happen if she ever found out; but apart from that, I am doing no more than state the plain truth when I say that Bradbury Fisher did not care a whoop.

Besides, at this point his golf suddenly underwent a remarkable improvement. He had always been a long driver, and quite abruptly he found that he was judging them nicely with the putter. Two weeks after he had started on his campaign of deception he amazed himself and all who witnessed the performance by cracking a hundred for the first time in his career. And every golfer knows that in the soul of the man who does that there is no room for remorse. Conscience may sting the player who is going round in a hundred and ten, but when it tries to make itself unpleasant to the man who is doing ninety-sevens and ninety-eights, it is simply wasting its time.

I WILL do Bradbury Fisher justice. He did regret that he was not in a position to tell his wife all about that first ninety-nine of his. And the forlorn feeling of being unable to confide his triumphs to a sympathetic ear deepened a week later when, miraculously achieving ninety-six in the medal round, he qualified for the sixth sixteen in the annual invitation tournament of the club to which he had attached himself.

"Shall I?" he mused, eyeing her wistfully across the Queen Anne table in the Crystal Boudoir, to which they had retired to drink their after-dinner coffee. "Better not, better not," whispered Prudence in his ear.

"Bradbury," said Mrs. Fisher.

"Yes, darling?"

"Have you been hard at work to-day?"

"Yes, precious. Very, very hard at work."

"Ho!" said Mrs. Maplebury.

"What did you say?" said Bradbury.

"I said ho!"

"What do you mean, ho?"

"Just ho. There is no harm, I imagine, in my saying ho, if I wish to."

"Oh, no," said Bradbury. "By no means. Not at all. Pray do so."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Maplebury. "Ho!"

"You do have to slave at the office, don't you?" said Mrs. Fisher.

"I do, indeed."

"It must be a great strain."

"A terrible strain. Yes, yes, a terrible strain."

"Then you won't object to giving it up, will you?"

Bradbury started.

"Giving it up?"

"Giving up going to the office. The fact is, dear," said Mrs. Fisher, "Vosper has complained."

"What about?"

"About you going to the office. He says he has never been in the employment of anyone engaged in commerce, and he doesn't like it. The Duke looked down on commerce very much. So I'm afraid, darling you will have to give it up."

Bradbury Fisher stared before him, a strange singing in his ears. The blow had been so sudden that he was stunned.

His fingers picked feverishly at the arm of his chair. He had paled to the very lips. If the office was barred to him, on what pretext could he sneak away from home? And sneak he must, for to-morrow and the day after the various qualifying sixteens were to play the match-rounds for the cups; and it was monstrous and impossible that he should not be there. He must be there. He had done a ninety-six, and the next best medal score in his sixteen was a hundred and one. For the first time in his life he had before him the prospect of winning a cup; and, highly though the poets have spoken of love, that emotion is not to be compared with the frenzy which grips a twenty-four handicap man who sees himself within reach of a cup.

Blindly he tottered from the room and sought his study. He wanted to be alone. He had to think, think.

The evening paper was lying on the table. Automatically he picked it up and ran his eye over the front page. And, as he did so, he uttered a sharp exclamation.

He leaped from his chair and returned to the boudoir, carrying the paper.

"Well, what do you know about this?" said Bradbury Fisher, in a hearty voice.

"We know a great deal about a good many things," said Mrs. Maplebury.

"What is it, Bradbury?" said Mrs. Fisher.

"I'm afraid I shall have to leave you for a couple of days. Great nuisance, but there it is. But, of course, I must be there."

"Where?"

"Ah, where?" said Mrs. Maplebury.

"At Sing-Sing. I see in the paper that

to-morrow and the day after they are inaugurating the new Osborne Stadium. All the men of my class will be attending, and I must go, too."

"Must you really?"

"I certainly must. Not to do so would be to show a lack of college spirit. The boys are playing Yale, and there is to be a big dinner afterwards. I shouldn't wonder if I had to make a speech. But don't worry, honey," he said, kissing his wife affectionately. "I shall be back before you know I've gone." He turned sharply to Mrs. Maplebury. "I beg your pardon?" he said, stiffly.

"I did not speak."

"I thought you did."

"I merely inhaled. I simply drew in air through my nostrils. If I am not at liberty to draw in air through my nostrils in your house, pray inform me."

"I would prefer that you didn't," said Bradbury, between set teeth.

"Then I would suffocate."

"Yes," said Bradbury Fisher.

OF all the tainted millionaires who, after years of plundering the widow and the orphan, have devoted the evening of their life to the game of golf, few can ever have been so boisterously exhilarated as was Bradbury Fisher when, two nights later, he returned to his home. His dreams had all come true. He had won his way to the foot of the rainbow. In other words, he was the possessor of a small pewter cup, value three dollars, which he had won by beating a spavined old gentleman with one eye in the final match of the competition for the sixth sixteen at the Squashy Hollow Golf Club Invitation Tournament.

He entered the house, radiant.

"Tra-la!" sang Bradbury Fisher. "Tra-la!"

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said Vosper, who had encountered him in the hall.

"Eh? Oh, nothing. Just tra-la."

"Very good, sir."

Bradbury Fisher looked at Vosper. For the first time it seemed to sweep over him like a wave that Vosper was an uncommonly good fellow. The past was forgotten, and he beamed upon Vosper like the rising sun.

"Vosper," he said, "what wages are you getting?"

"I regret to say, sir," replied the butler, "that, at the moment, the precise amount of the salary of which I am in receipt has slipped my mind. I could refresh my memory by consulting my books, if you so desire it, sir."

"Never mind. Whatever it is, it's doubled."

"I am obliged, sir. You will, no doubt, send me a written memo. to that effect?"

"Twenty, if you like."

"One will be ample, sir."

Bradbury curveted past him through the baronial hall and into the Crystal Boudoir. His wife was there alone.

"Mother has gone to bed," she said. "She has a bad headache."

"You don't say!" said Bradbury. It was as if everything was conspiring to make this a day of days. "Well, it's great to be back in the old home."

"Did you have a good time?"

"Capital."

"You saw all your old friends?"

"Every one of them."

"Did you make a speech at the dinner?"

"Did I! They rolled out of their seats and the waiters swept them up with dusters."

"A very big dinner, I suppose?"

"Enormous."

"How was the football game?"

"Best I've ever seen. We won. Number 432,986 made a hundred-and-ten-yard run for a touch down in the last five minutes."

"Really?"

"And that takes a bit of doing, with a ball and chain round your ankle, believe me!"

"Bradbury," said Mrs. Fisher, "where have you been these last two days?"

Bradbury's heart missed a beat. His wife was looking exactly like her mother. It was the first time he had ever been able to believe that she could be Mrs. Maplebury's daughter.

"Been? Why, I'm telling you."

"Bradbury," said Mrs. Fisher, "just one word. Have you seen the paper this morning?"

"Why, no. What with all the excitement of meeting the boys and this and that——"

"Then you have not seen that the inauguration of the new Stadium at Sing-Sing was postponed on account of an outbreak of mumps in the prison?"

Bradbury gulped.

"There was no dinner, no football game, no gathering of Old Grads—nothing! So—where have you been, Bradbury?"

Bradbury gulped again.

"You're sure you haven't got this wrong?" he said at length.

"Quite."

"I mean, sure it wasn't some other place?"

"Quite."

"Sing-Sing? You got the name correctly?"

"Quite. Where, Bradbury, have you been these last two days?"

"Well—er——"

Mrs. Fisher coughed dryly.

"I merely ask out of curiosity. The facts will, of course, come out in court."

"In court!"

"Naturally I propose to place this affair in the hands of my lawyer immediately."

Bradbury started convulsively.

"You mustn't!"

"I certainly shall."

A SHUDDER shook Bradbury from head to foot. He felt worse than he had done when his opponent in the final had laid him a stymie on the last green, thereby squaring the match and taking it to the nineteenth hole.

"I will tell you all," he muttered.

"Well?"

"Well—it was like this."

"Yes?"

"Er—like this. In fact, this way."

"Proceed."

Bradbury clenched his hands; and, as far as that could be managed, avoided her eye.

"I've been playing golf," he said in a low, toneless voice.

"Playing golf?"

"Yes." Bradbury hesitated. "I don't mean it in an offensive spirit, and no doubt most men would have enjoyed themselves thoroughly, but I—well, I am curiously constituted, angel, and the fact is I simply couldn't stand playing with you any longer. The fault, I am sure, was mine, but—well, there it is. If I had played another round with you, my darling, I think that I should have begun running about in circles, biting my best friends. So I thought it all over, and, not wanting to hurt your feelings by telling you the truth, I stooped to what I might call a ruse. I said I was going to the office; and, instead of going to the office, I went off to Squashy Hollow and played there."

Mrs. Fisher uttered a cry.

"You were there to-day and yesterday?"

In spite of his trying situation, the yeasty exhilaration which had been upon him when he entered the room returned to Bradbury.

"Was I!" he cried. "You bet your Russian boots I was! Only winning a cup, that's all!"

"You won a cup?"

"You bet your diamond tiara I won a cup. Say, listen," said Bradbury, diving for a priceless Boule table and wrenching a leg off it. "Do you know what happened in the semi-final?" He clasped his fingers over the table-leg in the overlapping grip. "I'm here, see, about fifteen feet off the green. The other fellow lying dead, and I'm playing the like. Best I could hope for was a half, you'll say, eh? Well, listen. I just walked up to that little white ball, and I gave it a little flick, and, believe me or believe me not, that little white ball never stopped running till it plunked into the hole."

He stopped. He perceived that he had been introducing into the debate extraneous and irrelevant matter.

"Honey," he said, fervently, "you mustn't get mad about this. Maybe, if we try again, it will be all right. Give me another chance. Let me come out and play a round to-morrow. I think perhaps your style of play is a thing that wants getting used to. After all, I didn't like olives the first time I tried them. Or whisky. Or caviare, for that matter. Probably if——"

Mrs. Fisher shook her head.

"I shall never play again."

"Oh, but, listen——"

She looked at him fondly, her eyes dim with happy tears.

"I should have known you better, Bradbury. I suspected you. How foolish I was."

"There, there," said Bradbury.

"It was mother's fault. She put ideas into my head."

There was much that Bradbury would have liked to say about her mother, but he felt that this was not the time.

"And you really forgive me for sneaking off and playing at Squashy Hollow?"

"Of course."

"Then why not a little round to-morrow?"

"No, Bradbury, I shall never play again. Vosper says I mustn't."

"What!"

"He saw me one morning on the links, and he came to me and told me—quite nicely and respectfully—that it must not occur again. He said with the utmost deference that I was making a spectacle of myself and that this nuisance must now cease. So I gave it up. But it's all right. Vosper thinks that gentle massage will cure my wheezing, so I'm having it every day, and really I do think there's an improvement already."

"Where is Vosper?" said Bradbury, hoarsely.

"You aren't going to be rude to him, Bradbury? He is so sensitive."

But Bradbury Fisher had left the room.

"YOU rang, sir?" said Vosper, entering the Byzantine smoking-room some few minutes later.

"Yes," said Bradbury. "Vosper, I am a plain, rugged man and I do not know all that there is to be known about these things. So do not be offended if I ask you a question."

"Not at all, sir."

"Tell me, Vosper, did the Duke ever shake hands with you?"

"Once only, sir—mistaking me in a dimly-lit hall for a visiting archbishop."

"Would it be all right for me to shake hands with you now?"

"If you wish it, sir, certainly."

"I want to thank you, Vosper. Mrs. Fisher tells me that you have stopped her playing golf. I think that you have saved my reason, Vosper."

"That is extremely gratifying, sir."

"Your salary is trebled."

"Thank you very much, sir. And, while we are talking, sir, if I might—— There is one other little matter I wished to speak of, sir."

"Shoot, Vosper."

"It concerns Mrs. Maplebury, sir."

"What about her?"

"If I might say so, sir, she would scarcely have done for the Duke."

A sudden wild thrill shot through Bradbury.

"You mean ——?" he stammered.

"I mean, sir, that Mrs. Maplebury must go. I make no criticism of Mrs. Maplebury, you will understand, sir. I merely say that she would decidedly not have done for the Duke."

Bradbury drew in his breath sharply.

"Vosper," he said, "the more I hear of that Duke of yours, the more I seem to like him. You really think he would have drawn the line at Mrs. Maplebury?"

"Very firmly, sir."

"Splendid fellow! splendid fellow! She shall go to-morrow, Vosper."

"Thank you very much, sir."

"And, Vosper."

"Sir?"

"Will that be all?"
"That will be all. Tra-la!"
"Tra-la, sir," said the butler.

"Your salary. It is quadrupled."

"I am greatly obliged, sir."

"Tra-la, Vosper!"

"Tra-la, sir. Will that be all?"

"That will be all. Tra-la!"

"Tra-la, sir," said the butler.

# ROMANTIC REGIMENTAL MARCHES

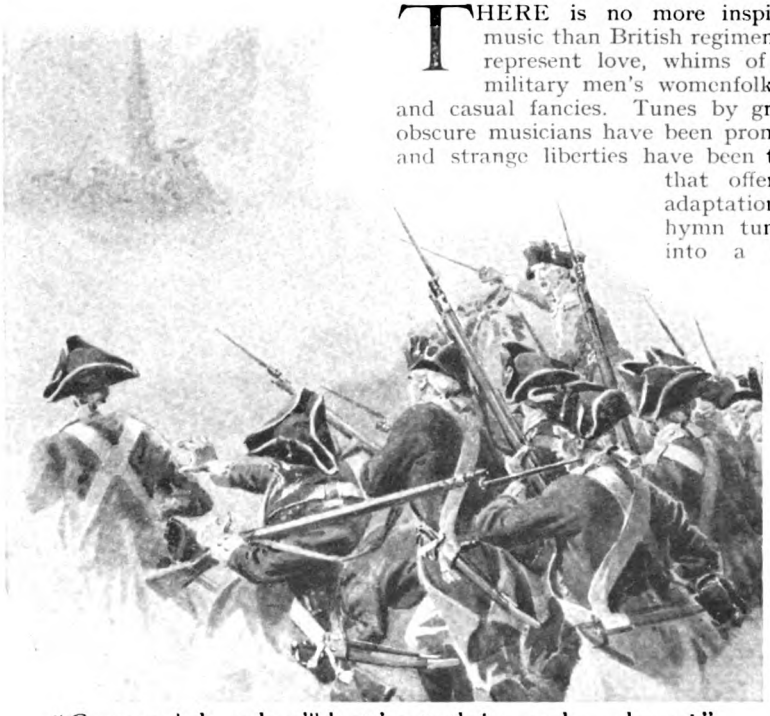
*By*

## WALTER WOOD

*ILLUSTRATED BY*
*W. B. WOLLEN, R.I.*

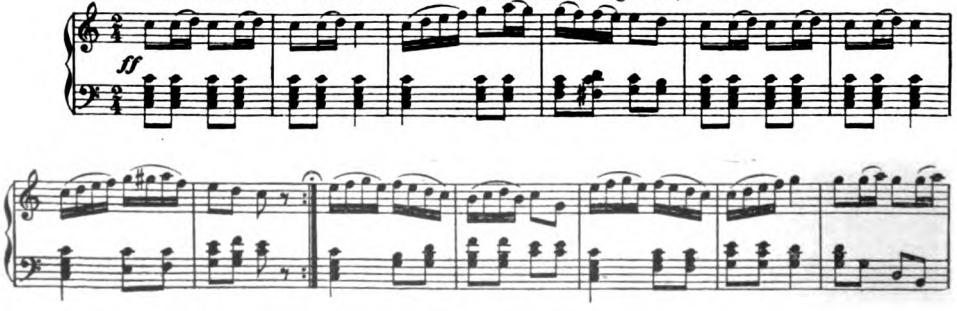
THERE is no more inspiring and romantic music than British regimental marches. They represent love, whims of military men and military men's womenfolk, battles, victories, and casual fancies. Tunes by great composers and obscure musicians have been promiscuously annexed, and strange liberties have been taken with material that offered little hope of adaptation; even a solemn hymn tune has been turned into a regimental march. Generals and colonels have produced marches which have come down the years to our own day, and several of the finest marches in the British Army are the creation of members of our royal families.

A regiment never dies, unless it is disbanded; it lives in the unbroken succession of its recruits, and with the regiment, except



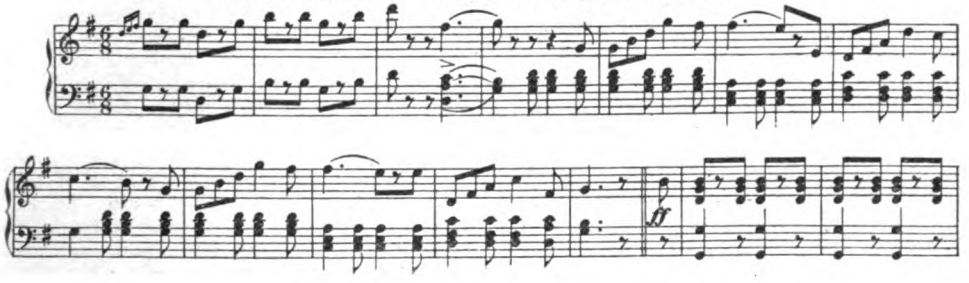
"Come on, lads, and we'll beat 'em to their own d——d tune!"

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S OWN. (West Yorkshire Regiment.) "CA IRA."



in rare cases, lives the march-past, or quick-step. When you hear a regimental march, it may be a tune that has been played unbrokenly for generations, or even centuries, as in the case of "Dumbarton's Drums," which has been the march of the Royal Scots for more than two hundred and fifty years; or you may be listening to a march that has been actually won in battle, like the famous "Ça ira" of the West Yorkshire Regiment.

THE DEVONSHIRE REGIMENT. "WE'VE LIVED AND LOVED TOGETHER"



During the French Revolution there was heard in Paris a song which became very popular, and to the weird strains of which many victims were hurried to the guillotine. The refrain was "Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!" and it became the party cry of the Revolutionists. The words were written by a street singer named Ladré, and the air was by an unknown musician called Bécourt. The song proclaimed death to the aristocrats and declared that in spite of all mutineers the Revolution would succeed. It is a bizarre tune, in keeping with the uncommon manner of its adoption as a British regimental march.

One hundred and thirty-two years ago the 14th Foot, now the West Yorkshire Regiment, were storming the French Revolutionary camp at Famars, which was being stubbornly defended to the strains of "Ça ira." The Yorkshiremen, accustomed though they were to hot work, found this attack a little too warm for them, and they were forced to fall back. Now came one of those desperate situations which are only saved by flashes of genius or inspiration. Such a flash illumined the mind of the colonel, for he rushed to the front, ordered his band to strike up "Ça ira," and shouting, "Come on, lads, and we'll beat 'em to their own d——d tune!" so fired his men with his own courage that they swept the gallant Frenchmen from the ground. We do not know what the quality or accuracy of the Revolutionary air was when added to the noise of battle by the band of the Old Fighting Fourteenth; but we do know that in recognition of its bravery at Famars the regiment was authorized to use "Ça ira" as its march, and from that day to this the stirring tune has been played in all parts of the world by bands of the West Yorkshires.

The wife of a contemporary colonel of the 2nd Battalion the Devonshire Regiment, the 11th Foot, is said to have been responsible for the adoption as a march of a very popular song called "We've Lived and Loved Together." This song was the "Tipperary" of the day; boys whistled and grown-ups sang it, and as the tune had a fine swing and the 11th wanted a march, the colonel's lady incited the regiment to take possession of it. In such a deserving cause the 11th responded loyally, and soon got into the way of footing it bravely to the strains of "We've Lived and Loved." If the story of this feminine head of the regiment is true, she should be credited with having made an admirable choice. But another tale is very different, and it is that just before the Battle of Salamanca, in 1812, which gave the regiment its significant nickname of the "Bloody Eleventh," because of its heavy losses in the fight, the 11th was marching near a French regiment. In the ordinary course of things the enemies should have been in action, but no order to attack had been given, and there occurred one of those strange incidents of which there were many in the Peninsular War. It was not a case of one side receiving the courteous invitation—which, let us hope, was never given—to fire first; but of officers on both sides doing the graceful thing by lowering their swords in mutual compliment. And more than that, from a motive which is a matter for interesting conjecture, the band of the 11th struck up "We've Lived and Loved Together"; and since that famous day the song of the hour has been the regimental march of the Devons.

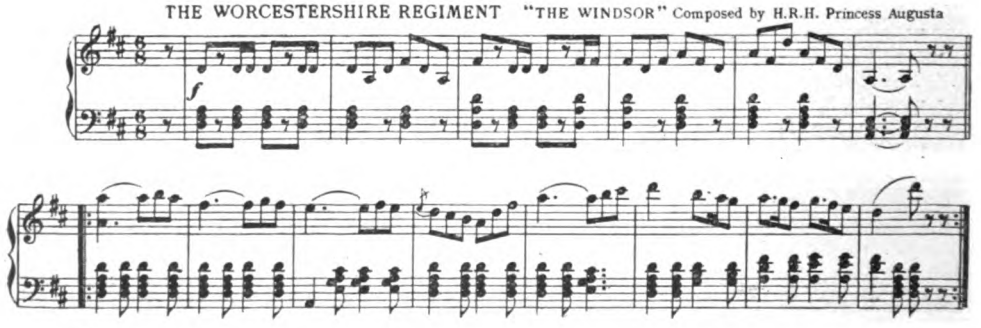
Princess Augusta, daughter of George III., presented "The Royal Windsor," which is one of the finest of our regimental marches, to the 29th Foot, now the 1st Worcestershire Regiment, the last British regiment to wear the pigtail and powdered hair. The 29th

were stationed at Windsor in 1791, and it was then that her Royal Highness, who was a musician, presented the tune to them. "The Royal Windsor" is believed to have been composed by her; but another version is that the tune came from abroad, Russia being given as the country of origin, and that the Princess arranged it as a march. The tune has been played since 1791 by the 1st Battalion, and since 1881, when the territorial system came into operation and a general scheme of regimental marches was issued from Kneller Hall, "The Royal Windsor" has been the official quick march of all battalions of the regiment. A peculiarity of the composition is a drum roll, which adds greatly to the effectiveness of a beautiful, rousing, and romantic military tune.

The Prince Consort composed for the regiment which bears his name—the Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's)—the almost unique tune which is called "Prince Albert's March." This is a rare case of a regimental march being played by the band and bugles together, a combination which adds vivacity even to a light infantry regiment, for those corps still have an official pace of one hundred and thirty-two to the minute, compared with the hundred and twenty of the Line.

Still another instance of a march of royal origin is that of the slow march of the 1st Life Guards, which was written for and dedicated to that distinguished Household regiment by the Duchess of Kent, mother of Queen Victoria. Many members of our Royal Family have been and are accomplished musicians, and we have these long-established marches, constantly played by military bands, to remind us that there were also in the family composers of exhilarating music.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT "THE WINDSOR" Composed by H.R.H. Princess Augusta



The regimental march of the Rifle Brigade, "I'm Ninety-Five," has a very interesting origin. In 1816 the Rifle Brigade, which was then numbered Ninety-Five, was removed from the numbered regiments of the Line in recognition of its valiant services, and became known as the Rifle Brigade. In the early 'forties the 1st Battalion was at Malta, and the bandmaster, or, as he was then called, the music master, turned the old song, "I'm Ninety-Five," into a march. The battalion had an amateur theatre at Malta, and a rifleman named Goodall used to sing the song, dressed as an old woman of ninety-five. This fired the music master, Mr. William Miller, to bring the tune out on the band; but for the time being it was accepted as part of the ordinary programme.

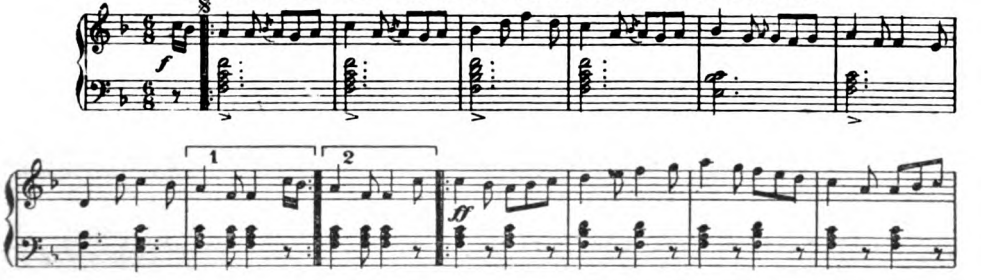
The battalion, however, was sent to the Cape during the war of 1846-48, and the fatigue of the long marches was greatly lessened when "I'm Ninety-Five" was played. "The first day the battalion marched into camp there was not a limping man amongst the lot," declared the music master proudly; so he continued the tune through the war and the second Cape War of 1851-53. During the battalion's stay at Fort Beaufort in 1852, the song became the regimental quick-step, and was a very great favourite. Four years later it was played before Queen Victoria, who was so pleased with it that she commanded Mr. Miller to send a copy to Windsor. After that Royal notice there was no longer any doubt about the march, and the Rifle Brigade took "I'm Ninety-Five" permanently to its regimental bosom.

An officer of the 95th—a quaint and worthy young Yorkshireman named George Simmons—in describing the march from Hythe to Dover in May, 1809, to embark for the Peninsula, said: "Our men are in very high spirits, and we have a most excellent band of music and thirty bugle-horns, which through every country village strikes up the old tune, 'Over the Hills and Far Away.'"

That is merely one of many instances of old songs being used as marches by British regiments, first in a general way and afterwards officially, so that we now have as established marches such famous songs as "D'ye Ken John Peel?" (the Border

Regiment), "The Young May Moon" (the Sherwood Foresters), "The Dashing White Sergeant" (the Royal Berkshire Regiment), "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen" (the King's Regiment), "The Lincolnshire Poacher" (the Lincolnshire Regiment),

THE RIFLE BRIGADE (The Prince Consort's Own.) "I'M NINETY-FIVE!"



"A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky" (the East Surrey Regiment), "The Days When We Went Gipsying" (the North Staffordshire Regiment), and "Rule Britannia" (the Norfolk Regiment).

At first sight it seems strange indeed that British infantry should have that truly national air, "Rule Britannia," as a march; but the Norfolks have good reason for using and being proud of it. For more than two centuries this gallant corps, the old 9th Foot, has borne the figure of Britannia as a badge, to commemorate its heroism in the disastrous Battle of Almanza, in Spain, when most of the English were killed or captured. A hundred years later the 9th and the Spaniards were fighting side by side, and the Spaniards, thinking that the badge represented a saint, called the 9th the Holy Boys, though, like the rest of the British troops in the Peninsula, they were anything but that, as Wellington repeatedly and almost despairingly declared. It is a remarkable fact that while the Spaniards were calling the 9th the Holy Boys Wellington was making the horrifying discovery that "Methodism is spreading very fast in the Army." There was a Methodist meeting in the 9th, at which two officers attended, and the commanding officer had not yet "been able to prevail upon them to discontinue this practice." The Duke believed that the cure for Methodism and the misguided officers of the 9th would be found in the assistance of a "respectable clergyman" and "true religion." To this little aside it may be added that in due course it was felt that no more suitable march past for the 9th than "Rule Britannia" could be found; and for many years the grand old tune has inspired the Holy Boys and legions of the rest of us.

The Peninsular War also gave "The Young May Moon" to the 45th Foot, which became the 1st Sherwood Foresters. The 45th had made a long and hard march so that they might share in the assault on the famous fortress. They arrived in time to take part in the storming, and as they came up the band played "The Young May Moon," the old name of which was "The Dandy, O!" It was about as inappropriate a song for entering upon such a desperate business as one can imagine; but it served its purpose nobly, and from that time onward "The Young May Moon" has been the regimental march of the Sherwood Foresters. The words are by Moore, and the first verse is:—

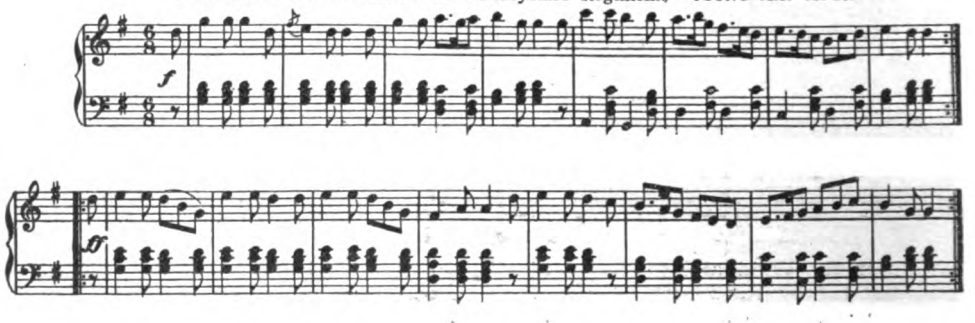
*The young May moon is beaming, Love,*
*The glowworm's lamp is gleaming, Love;*
*How sweet to rove*
*Thro' Morna's grove,*
*While the drowsy world is dreaming, Love!*
*Then awake! the heav'ns look bright, my Dear!*
*'Tis never too late for delight, my Dear!*
*And the best of all ways*
*To lengthen our days,*
*Is to steal a few hours from the night, my Dear!*

It is hard to believe that our National Anthem could be turned into a regimental march; yet until the year 1881 the 1st Battalion Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, now the Queen's Royal Regiment, marched past to "God Save the Queen." For more than a century the regiment had used the air as a march, and it was fitting enough that a corps bearing Her Majesty's name should have the distinction; but contemporary busybodies thought otherwise, and the National Anthem was superseded by—what? A Portuguese tune, and not only had it no name, but apparently it never had one. That slight difficulty, however, was overcome by calling the new march "Braganza," a very appropriate title, for the regiment was raised in 1661 to garrison

Tangier, in Morocco, which was part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, the Infanta of Portugal, who married Charles II. The tune, which is the regimental march of the Queen's, adds interest and variety to the remarkable collection of British regimental marches.

To turn "God Save the Queen" into a kilted Scottish regiment, but the 88th was Irish, its regimental march being "St. Patrick's Day." So far so good. "St. Patrick's Day" makes a rattling quick-step, and the 88th had no difficulty in marching to it; but the 94th was in a different position, for it had to march past as a hybrid unit, partly Scotch and partly Irish, this

THE SHERWOOD FORESTERS (Derbyshire Regiment) "YOUNG MAY MOON."



something that it was not was a creditable achievement; but to twist an old hymn tune about so that it would help the British soldier on his way was astonishing. The apparently impossible was accomplished in the case of the old 20th Foot, now the Lancashire Fusiliers. Prior to that period of regimental upheaval which has been already mentioned—1881—the 20th had got many bright moments from the strains of the "Minden March." This was really an old hymn tune named Lammas Day. The famous Battle of Minden was fought on Lammas Day—August 1st, 1759—and the 20th bore such a noble part in the fight that to this day they wear Minden roses in their caps on each First of August. And the hymn tune, played in quick time, made a cherished march, though the effect was peculiar, especially upon the acute senses of the musical enthusiast. The late Duke of Cambridge was not particularly musical—certainly his voice did not suggest the gift; but even he did not look upon the hymn as being altogether fitted for marching purposes, and he more than once, in his frank, strong way, commented adversely upon the "Minden March." The afflicted tune was returned to the hymn book, and superseded, of necessity, by the "British Grenadiers," which became common to all Fusilier regiments, just as "Highland Laddie" was allocated to all Highland regiments.

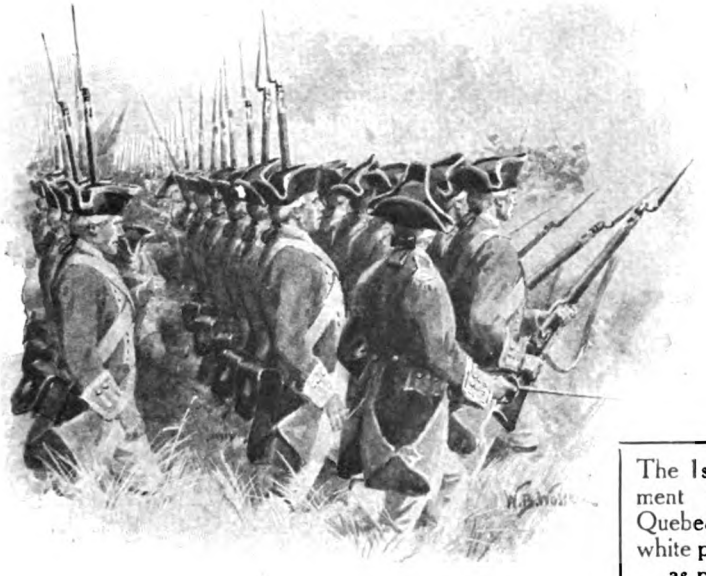
Another decided curiosity in regimental marches was associated with the 2nd Battalion Connaught Rangers, the 94th Foot, disbanded, with the 1st Battalion, the 88th, in 1922. The 94th was originally performance being gone through to "Blue Bonnets Over the Border" for the first half of the march and "St. Patrick's Day" for the second half. The result on ceremonial parade was surprising, not to say bewildering, as anyone will realize who compares the two tunes. This anomaly existed in the days of eight companies, and what happened at the saluting-base was this: The first four companies went past in grand style to "Blue Bonnets," then the time changed with "St. Patrick's Day," and do what it would the unlucky Number 5 was invariably out of step as it passed the flag. The band kept time perfectly, but the "lilt" had changed and the men were temporarily thrown out of step. The effect was disastrous to a ceremonial parade, and much exasperation and disappointment inevitably arose through the effort to amalgamate two irreconcilable tunes.

"The Royal Sussex," which is the march of the 1st Royal Sussex Regiment, the 35th Foot, is a link with the memory of General Wolfe. The 35th highly distinguished themselves in the capture of Quebec in 1759. They then won the white plume which they wear as part of their badge; and it was doubtless through their association with Wolfe that the existing march was adopted. The air was originally a French march and was used nearly two centuries ago. It was adopted by the 35th after the capture of Quebec, so there is good reason to believe that "The Royal Sussex" originated as indicated, though no proof exists. Tradition plays a great part in connection with British regimental marches.

A rare case of a regimental march being the work of two general officers is afforded by " The Garb of Old Gaul," very familiar in association with the Scots Guards and the Scots Greys. The writer of the song was Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Erskine, Bart., and the composer was General John Reed, who bequeathed a large sum of money to found a professorship of music in Edinburgh University. This fine and impressive tune is the slow march of the Scots Guards, and is used by the Scots Greys for marching past when mounted and as a slow march on foot.

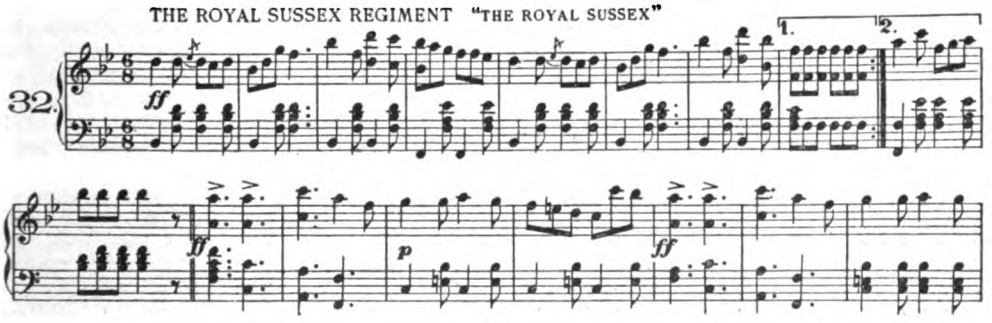
Another military verse writer was Colonel Willyams, commanding the 1st Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry when it was the 32nd Foot. Napoleon was then a universal bogey, and the 32nd volunteered to serve in Ireland, to help to keep him out of the country. There was a rollicking tune called " One and All," which is the motto of Cornwall, and the colonel was inspired to write some verses to fit it. This is one of them :—

*But see the transports crowd the strand :*
*We soon shall find on Irish land*
*" Erin go bragh "*
*go hand in hand*
*With One and All.*
*And as for French and foreign foes,*
*We'll twine the shamrock with the rose,*
*And pull old Boney by the nose—*
*Pull, One and All.*



The 1st Royal Sussex Regiment at the capture of Quebec, when they won the white plume which they wear as part of their badge.

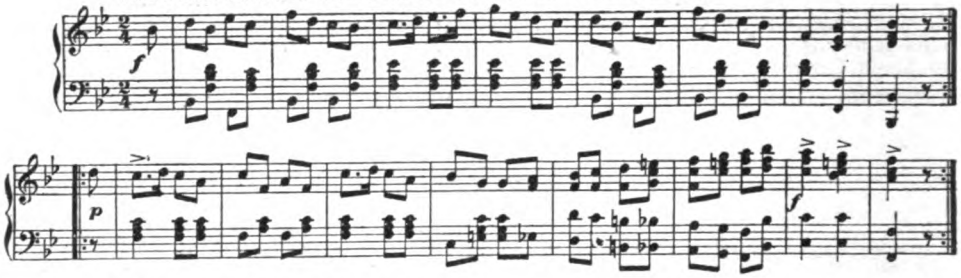
THE ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT "THE ROYAL SUSSEX"




" One and All " is the regimental march of the Cornwalls, and the cheerful strains have kept the old 32nd company in many climes since the reign of the poetical commanding officer.

" Dumbarton's Drums " is the only other march that can be dealt with in a limited space. It is a wonderful example of a tune that has reached us in continuous succession for a long period of time—Pepys himself heard it in 1667 at Rochester, when it was

THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY "ONE AND ALL."



known as " The Scots March." " Here in the streets," he recorded in his diary, " I did hear the Scotch march beat by the drums before the soldiers, which is very odd.' At that time the Royal Scots were known as Dumbarton's Regiment, and they had been ordered to Rochester. The words, by an unknown author, begin with " Dumbarton's Drums beat Bonnie, O." They are believed to have been written by a soldier of the regiment itself, and that he set them to the tune he had so often heard from the drums of Dumbarton's Regiment. No special merit is claimed for the march, the chief interest of which lies in its antiquity and long association with what is said to be the oldest regiment in the world.

There are many unofficial tunes which have been played as marches or otherwise by British soldiers throughout the world, in all circumstances of war and peace. Amongst them is one that will always be associated with the " Illustrious Garrison " of Jellalabad. After the Kabul massacre of 1841 a small British garrison held the fort for five months, and when it seemed as if relief would never come the exhausted survivors saw the brother redcoats who had marched to their salvation. The sight electrified the gaunt defenders, and their glad cheers mingled with the strains of the bandsmen, who mounted the mud walls and joyously played the deliverers in to the tune of " Oh! But You've Been a Long Time a-Comin'! "

The bandsmen mounted the mud walls and joyously played the deliverers in to the tune of "Oh! But You've Been a Long Time a-Comin'!"

*Music retroduced from the " Cavendish Music Book," by permission of Messrs. Boosey & Co.*

# The Land of Mist

OR

## THE QUEST OF EDWARD MALONE

By

# A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
F. E. HILEY

XVI.

IN WHICH CHALLENGER HAS THE EXPERIENCE OF HIS LIFETIME.

SO now the nets were set and the pit was dug and the hunters were all ready for the great quarry, but the question was whether the creature would allow himself to be driven in the right direction. Had Challenger been told that the meeting was really held in the hope of putting convincing evidence before him as to the truth of spirit intercourse with a hope of his eventual conversion it would have roused mingled anger and derision in his breast. But the clever Malone, aided and abetted by Enid, still put forward the idea that his presence would be a protection against fraud, and that he would be able to point out to them how and why they had been deceived. With this thought in his mind Challenger gave a contemptuous and condescending consent to the proposal that he should grace with his presence a proceeding which was in his opinion more fitted to the stone cabin of a neolithic savage than to the serious attention of one who represented the accumulated culture and wisdom of the human race.

Enid accompanied her father, and he also brought with him a curious companion who was strange both to Malone and to the rest of the company. This was a large, raw-boned Scottish youth, with a freckled face, a huge figure, and a taciturnity which nothing could penetrate. No question could discover where his interests in psychic research might lie, and the only positive thing obtained from him was that his name was Nicholl. Malone and Mailey went together to the rendezvous at Holland Park, where they found awaiting them Delicia Freeman, the Rev. Charles Mason, Mr. and Mrs. Ogilvy of the College, Mr. Bolsover of Hammersmith, and Lord John Roxton, who had become assiduous in his psychic studies, and was rapidly progressing in knowledge. There were eleven in all, a mixed inharmonious assembly, from which no experienced investigator could expect great results. On entering the séance room Linden was found seated in the arm-chair, his wife beside him, and was introduced collectively to the company, most of whom were already his friends. Challenger took up the matter at once with the air of a man who will stand no nonsense.

"Is this the medium?" he asked, eyeing Linden with much disfavour.

"Yes."

"Has he been searched?"

"Not yet."

"Who will search him?"

"Two men of the company have been selected."

Challenger sniffed his suspicions.

"Which men?" he asked.

"It is suggested that you and your friend, Mr. Nicholl, shall do so. There is a bedroom next door."

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Poor Linden was marched off between them in a manner which reminded him unpleasantly of his prison experiences. He had been nervous before, but this ordeal and the overpowering presence of Challenger made him still more so. He shook his head mournfully at Mailey when he reappeared.

"I doubt we shall get nothing to-day. Maybe it would be wise to postpone the sitting," said he.

Mailey came round and patted him on the shoulder, while Mrs. Linden took his hand.

"It's all right, Tom," said Mailey. "Remember that you have a bodyguard of friends round you who won't see you ill-used." Then Mailey spoke to Challenger in a sterner way than was his wont. "I beg you to remember, sir, that a medium is as delicate an instrument as any to be found in your laboratories. Do not abuse it. I presume that you found nothing compromising upon his person?"

"No, sir, I did not. And as a result he assures us that we shall get nothing to-day."

"He says so because your manner has disturbed him. You must treat him more gently."

Challenger's expression did not promise any amendment. His eyes fell upon Mrs. Linden.

"I understand that this person is the medium's wife. She should also be searched."

"That is a matter of course," said the Scotsman Ogilvy. "My wife and your daughter will take her out. But I beg you, Professor Challenger, to be as harmonious as you can, and to remember that we are all as interested in the results as you are, so that the whole company will suffer if you should disturb the conditions."

Mr. Bolsover, the grocer, rose with as much dignity as if he were presiding at his favourite Temple.

"I move," said he, "that Professor Challenger be searched."

Challenger's beard bristled with anger.

"Search me! What do you mean, sir?"

Bolsover was not to be intimidated.

"You are here not as our friend but as our enemy. If you was to prove fraud it would be a personal triumph for you—see? Therefore I, for one, says as you should be searched."

"Do you mean to insinuate, sir, that I am capable of cheating?" trumpeted Challenger.

"Well, Professor, we are all accused of it in turn," said Mailey, smiling. "We all feel as indignant as you are at first, but after a time you get used to it. I've been called a liar, a lunatic—goodness knows what. What does it matter?"

"It is a monstrous proposition!" said Challenger, glaring all round him.

"Well, sir," said Ogilvy, who was a particularly pertinacious Scot, "of course, it is open to you to walk out of the room and leave us. But if you sit, you must sit under what we consider to be scientific conditions. It is not scientific that a man who is known to be bitterly hostile to the movement should sit with us in the dark with no check as to what he may have in his pockets."

"Come, come!" cried Malone. "Surely we can trust to the honour of Professor Challenger?"

"That's all very well," said Bolsover. "I did not observe that Professor Challenger trusted so very much to the honour of Mr. and Mrs. Linden."

"We have cause to be careful," said Ogilvy. "I can assure you that there are frauds practised on mediums, just as there are frauds practised by mediums. I could give you plenty of examples. No, sir, you will have to be searched."

"It won't take a minute," said Lord John Roxton. "What I mean, young Malone here and I could give you a once-over in no time."

"Quite so; come on!" said Malone.

AND so Challenger, like a red-eyed bull with dilating nostrils, was led from the room. A few minutes later, all preliminaries being completed, they were seated in the circle and the séance had begun.

But already the conditions had been destroyed. Those meticulous researchers who insist upon tying up a medium until the poor creature resembles a fowl trussed for roasting, or who glare their suspicions at him before the lights are lowered, do not realize that they are like people who add moisture to gunpowder and then expect to explode it. They ruin their own results, and then, when those results do not occur, imagine that their own astuteness, rather than their own lack of understanding, has been the cause.

Hence it is that at humble gatherings all over the land in an atmosphere of sympathy and of reverence there are such happenings as the cold man of Science is never privileged to see.

All the sitters felt churned up by the preliminary altercation, but how much more did it mean to the sensitive centre of it all! To him the room was filled with conflicting eddies of psychic power, whirling this way or that, and as difficult for him to navigate as the rapids below Niagara. He groaned in his despair. Everything was mixed and confused. He was beginning as usual with his clairvoyance, but

names buzzed in his etheric ears without sequence or order. The word "John" seemed to predominate, so he said so. Did "John" mean anything to anyone? A cavernous laugh from Challenger was the only reply. Then he had the surname of Chapman. Yes, Mailey had lost a friend named Chapman. But it was years ago, and there seemed no reason for his presence, nor could he furnish his Christian name. "Budworth"—no, no one would own to a friend named Budworth. Definite messages came across, but they seemed to have no reference to the present company. Everything was going amiss, and Malone's spirits sank to zero. Challenger sniffed so loudly that Ogilvy remonstrated.

"You make matters worse, sir, when you show your feelings," said he. "I can assure you that in ten years of constant experience I have never known the medium so far out, and I attribute it entirely to your own conduct."

"Quite so," said Challenger, with satisfaction.

"I am afraid it is no use, Tom," said Mrs. Linden. "How are you feeling now, dear? Would you wish to stop?"

But Linden, under all his gentle exterior, was a fighter. He had in another form those same qualities which had brought his brother within an ace of the Lonsdale Belt.

"No; I think, maybe, it is only the mental part that is confused. If I am in trance I'll get past that. The physicals may be better. Anyhow, I'll try."

THE lights were turned lower until they were a mere crimson glimmer. The curtain of the cabinet was drawn. Outside it on the one side, dimly outlined to his audience, Tom Linden, breathing stertorously in his trance, lay back in a wooden arm-chair. His wife kept watch and ward at the other side of the cabinet.

But nothing happened.

Quarter of an hour passed. Then another quarter of an hour. The company was patient, but Challenger had begun to fidget in his seat. Everything seemed to have gone cold and dead. Not only was nothing happening, but somehow all expectation of anything happening seemed to have passed away.

"It's no use!" cried Mailey at last.

"I fear not," said Malone.

The medium stirred and groaned; he was waking up. Challenger gave an ostentatious yawn.

"Is not this a waste of time?" he asked.

Mrs. Linden was passing her hand over the medium's head and brow. His eyes had opened.

"Any results?" he asked.

"It's no use, Tom. We shall have to postpone."

"I think so, too," said Mailey.

"It is a great strain upon him under these adverse conditions," remarked Ogilvy, looking angrily at Challenger.

"I should think so," said the latter, with a complacent smile.

But Linden was not to be beaten.

"The conditions are bad," said he. "The vibrations are all wrong. But I'll try inside the cabinet. It concentrates the force."

"Well, it's the last chance," said Mailey. "We may as well try it."

The arm-chair was lifted inside the cloth tent and the medium followed, drawing the curtain behind him.

"It condenses the ectoplasmic emanations," Ogilvy explained.

"No doubt," said Challenger. "At the same time, in the interests of truth, I must point out that the disappearance of the medium is most regrettable."

"For goodness' sake don't start wrangling again," cried Mailey, with impatience. "Let us get some results, and then it will be time enough to discuss their value."

Again there was a weary wait. Then came some hollow groanings from inside the cabinet. The Spiritualists sat up expectantly.

"That's ectoplasm," said Ogilvy. "It always causes pain on emission."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the curtains were torn open with sudden violence and a rattling of all the rings. In the dark aperture there was outlined a vague white figure. It advanced slowly and with hesitation into the centre of the room. In the red-tinted gloom all definite outline was lost, and it appeared simply as a moving white patch in the darkness. With a deliberation which suggested fear it came, step by step, until it was opposite the Professor.

"Now!" he bellowed, in his stentorian voice.

There was a shout, a scream, a crash. "I've got him!" roared someone. "Turn up the lights!" yelled another. "Be careful! You may kill the medium," cried a third. The circle was broken. Challenger rushed to the switch and put on all the lights. The place was so flooded with radiance that it was some seconds before the bewildered and half-blinded spectators could see the details.

When they had recovered their sight and their balance the spectacle was a deplorable one for the majority of the company. Tom Linden, looking white, dazed, and ill, was seated upon the ground. Over him stood the huge young Scotsman who had

borne him to earth; while Mrs. Linden, kneeling beside her husband, was glaring up at his assailant. There was silence as the company surveyed the scene. It was broken by Professor Challenger.

"Well, gentlemen, I presume that there is no more to be said. Your medium has been exposed as he deserved to be. You can see now the nature of your ghosts. I must thank Mr. Nicholl, who, I may remark, is the famous football player of that name, for the prompt way in which he has carried out his instructions."

"I collared him low," said the tall youth. "He was easy."

"You did it very effectively. You have done public service by helping to expose a heartless cheat. I need not say that a prosecution will follow."

But Mailey now intervened, and with such authority that Challenger was forced to listen.

"Your mistake is not unnatural, sir, though the course which you adopted in your ignorance is one which might well have been fatal to the medium."

"My ignorance, indeed! If you speak like that I warn you that I shall look upon you not as dupes, but as accomplices."

"One moment, Professor Challenger. I would ask you one direct question, and I ask for an equally direct reply. Was not the figure which we all saw before this painful episode a white figure?"

"Yes, it was."

"You see now that the medium is entirely dressed in black. Where is the white garment?"

"It is immaterial to me where it is. No doubt his wife and himself are prepared for all eventualities. They have their own means of secreting the sheet, or whatever it may have been. These details can be explained in the police-court."

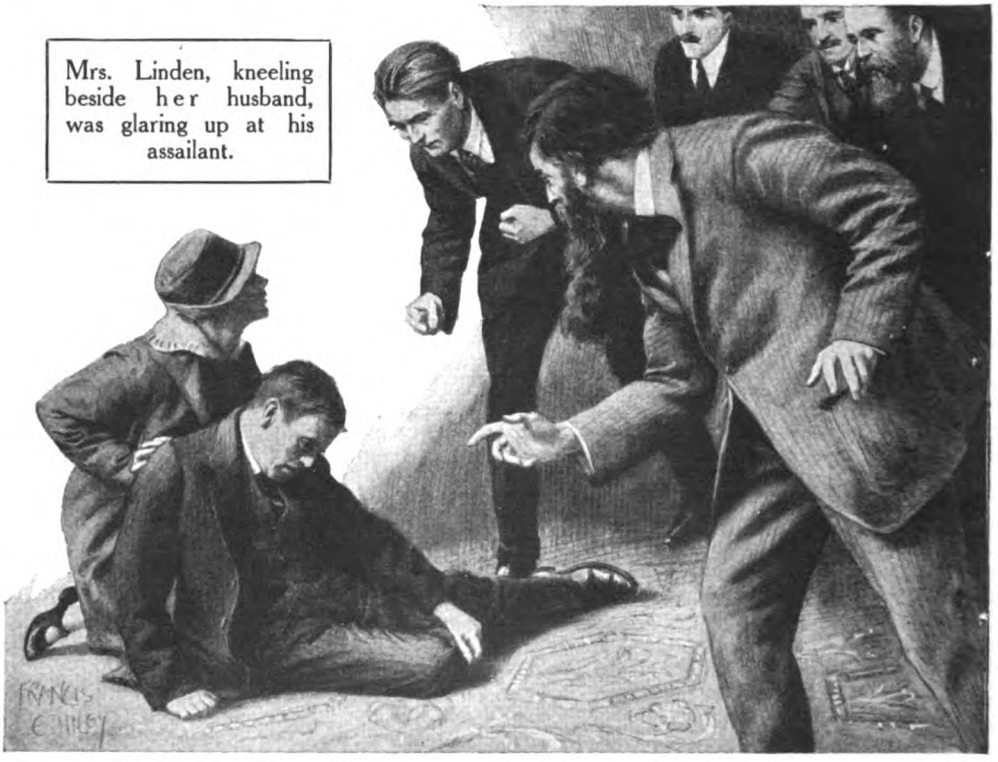
"Examine now. Search the room for anything white."

"I know nothing of the room. I can only use my common sense. The man is exposed masquerading as a spirit. Into what corner or crevice he has thrust his disguise is a matter of small importance."

"On the contrary, it is a vital matter. What you have seen has not been an imposture, but has been a very real psychic phenomenon."

Challenger laughed.

"Yes, sir, a very real phenomenon. You have seen a transfiguration which is the



Mrs. Linden, kneeling beside her husband, was glaring up at his assailant.

half-way state of materialization. You will kindly realize that spirit guides, who conduct such affairs, care nothing for your doubts and suspicions. They set themselves to get certain results, and if they are prevented, by the infirmities of the circle, from getting them one way, they get them in another without consulting your prejudice or convenience. In this case, being unable, owing to the evil conditions which you have yourself created, to build up an ectoplasmic form, they wrapped the unconscious medium in an ectoplasmic covering, and sent him forth from the cabinet. He is as innocent of imposture as you are."

"I swear to God," said Linden, "that from the time I entered the cabinet until I found myself upon the floor I knew nothing." He had staggered to his feet, and was shaking all over in his agitation; so that he could not hold the glass of water which his wife had brought him.

Challenger shrugged his shoulders.

"Your excuses," he said, "only open up fresh abysses of credulity. My own duty is obvious, and it will be done to the uttermost. Whatever you have to say will, no doubt, receive such consideration as it deserves from the magistrate."

Then Professor Challenger turned to go as one who has triumphantly accomplished that for which he came. "Come, Enid!" said he.

AND now occurred a development so sudden, so unexpected, so dramatic that no one present will ever cease to have it in vivid memory.

No answer was returned to Challenger's call.

Everyone else had risen to their feet. Only Enid remained in her chair. She sat with her head on one shoulder, her eyes closed, her hair partly loosened, a model for a sculptor.

"She is asleep," said Challenger. "Wake up, Enid. I am going."

There was no response from the girl. Mailey was bending over her.

"Hush! Don't disturb her! She is in trance."

Challenger rushed forward. "What have you done? Your infernal hanky-panky has frightened her. She has fainted."

Mailey had raised her eyelid.

"No, no; her eyes are turned up. She is in trance. Your daughter, sir, is a powerful medium."

"A medium! You are raving. Wake up, girl, wake up!"

"For God's sake leave her! You may regret it all your life if you don't. It is not safe to break abruptly into the mediumistic trance."

Challenger stood in bewilderment. For once his presence of mind had deserted him. Was it possible that his child stood on the edge of some mysterious precipice and that he might push her over?

"What shall I do?" he asked, helplessly.

"Have no fear. All will be well. Sit down. Sit down, all of you. Ah! she is about to speak."

The girl had stirred. She had sat straight in her chair. Her lips trembled. One hand was outstretched.

"For him!" she cried, pointing to Challenger. "He must not hurt my Medi. It is a message. For him."

There was breathless silence among the persons who had gathered round the girl.

"Who speaks?" asked Mailey.

"Victor speaks, Victor. He shall not hurt my Medi. I have a message. For him!"

"Yes, yes. What is the message?"

"His wife is here."

"Yes!"

"She says that she has been once before. That she came through this girl. It was after she was buried. She knock and he hear her knocking, but not understand."

"Does this mean anything to you, Professor Challenger?"

His great eyebrows were bunched over his suspicious, questioning eyes, and he glared like a beast at bay from one to the other of the faces round him. There was a trick—a vile trick. They had suborned his own daughter. It was damnable. He would expose them, every one. No, he had no questions to ask. He could see through it all. She had been won over. He could not have believed it of her, and yet it must be so. She was doing it for Malone's sake. A woman would do anything for a man she loved. Yes, it was damnable. Far from being softened, he was more vindictive than ever. His furious face, his broken words, expressed his convictions.

Again the girl's arm shot out, pointing in front of her.

"Another message!"

"To whom?"

"To him. The man who wanted to hurt my Medi. He must not hurt my Medi. A man here—two men—wish to give him a message."

"Yes, Victor, let us have it."

"First man's name is——" The girl's head slanted and her ear was upturned, as if listening. "Yes, yes, I have it! It was Al—Al—Aldridge."

"Does that mean anything to you?"

Challenger staggered. A look of absolute wonder had come upon his face.

"What is the second man?" he asked.

"Ware. Yes, that is it. Ware."

Challenger sat down suddenly. He passed

his hand over his brow. He was deadly pale—his face clammy with sweat

"Do you know them?"

"I knew two men of that name."

"They have message for you," said the girl.

Challenger seemed to brace himself for a blow.

"Well, what is it?"

"Too private. Not speak, all these people here."

"We will wait outside," said Mailey. "Come, friends, let the Professor have his message."

They moved towards the door, leaving the man seated in front of his daughter. An unwonted nervousness seemed suddenly to seize him. "Malone, stay with me!"

The door closed and the three were left together.

"What is the message?"

"It is about a powder."

"Yes, yes."

"A grey powder."

"Yes."

"The message that men want to say is: 'You did not kill us.'"

"Ask them, then—ask them—how did they die?" His voice was broken and his great frame was quivering with his emotion.

"They die disease."

"What disease?"

"New—new—what that?—pneumonia."

Challenger sank back in his chair, with an immense sigh of relief. "My God!" he cried, wiping his brow. Then:—

"Call in the others, Malone."

They had waited on the landing and now streamed into the room. Challenger had risen to meet them. His first words were to Tom Linden. He spoke like a shaken man whose pride for the instant was broken.

"As to you, sir, I do not presume to judge you. A thing has occurred to me which is so strange, and also so certain, since my own trained senses have attested it, that I am not prepared to deny any explanation which has been offered of your previous conduct. I beg to withdraw any injurious expressions I may have used."

Tom Linden was a true Christian in his character. His forgiveness was instant and sincere.

"I cannot doubt that my daughter has some strange power which bears out much which you, Mr. Mailey, have told me. I was justified in my scientific scepticism, but you have to-day offered me some incontrovertible evidence."

"We all go through the same experience, Professor. We doubt, and then in turn we are doubted."

"I can hardly conceive that my word will be doubted upon such a point," said Challenger, with dignity. "I can truly say that I have had information to-night which no living person upon this earth was in a position to give. So much is beyond all question."

"The young lady is better," said Mrs. Linden.

Enid was sitting up and staring round her with bewildered eyes.

"What has happened, father? I seem to have been asleep."

"All right, dear. We will talk of that later. Come home with me now. I have much to think over. Perhaps you will come back with us, Malone. I feel that I owe you some explanation."

WHEN Professor Challenger reached his flat he gave Austin orders that he was on no account to be disturbed, and he led the way into his library, where he sat in his great arm-chair with Malone upon his left and his daughter upon his right. He had stretched out his great paw and enclosed Enid's small hand.

"My dear," he said, after a long silence, "I cannot doubt that you are possessed of a strange power, for it has been shown to me to-night with a fullness and a clearness which is final. Since you have it, I cannot deny that others may have it also, and the general idea of mediumship has entered within my conceptions of what is possible. I will not discuss the question, for my thoughts are still confused upon the subject, and I shall need to thrash the thing out with you, young Malone, and with your friends before I can get a more definite idea. I will only say that my mind has received a shock, and that a new avenue of knowledge seems to have opened up before me."

"We shall be proud indeed," said Malone, "if we can help you."

Challenger gave a wry smile.

"Yes, I have no doubt that a headline in your paper—'Conversion of Professor Challenger'—would be a triumph. I warn you that I have not got so far."

"We certainly would do nothing premature, and your opinions may remain entirely private."

"I have never lacked the moral courage to proclaim my opinions when they are formed, but the time has not yet come. However, I have received two messages to-night, and I can only ascribe to them an extra-corporeal origin. I take it for granted, Enid, that you were indeed insensible."

"I assure you, father, that I knew nothing."

"Quite so. You have always been incapable of deceit. First there came a message from your mother. She assured me that she had indeed produced those sounds

**"Ask them, then—ask them—how did they die?" Challenger's voice was broken and his great frame was quivering with his emotion.**

which I heard and of which I have told you. It is clear now that you were the medium and that you were not in sleep, but in trance. It is incredible, inconceivable, grotesquely wonderful—but it would seem to be true."

"Crookes used almost those very words," said Malone. "He wrote that it was all 'perfectly impossible and absolutely true.'"

"I owe him an apology. Perhaps I owe a good many people an apology."

"None will ever be asked for," said Malone. "These people are not made that way."

"It is the second case which I would explain." The Professor fidgeted uneasily in his chair. "It is a matter of great privacy

—one to which I have never alluded, and which no one on earth could have known. Since you heard so much you may as well hear all.

"It happened when I was a young physician, and it is not too much to say that it cast a cloud over my life—a cloud which has only been raised to-night. Others may try to explain what has occurred by telepathy, by subconscious mind action, by what they will, but I cannot doubt—it is impossible to doubt—that a message has come to me from the dead.

"There was a new drug under discussion at that time. It is useless to enter into details which you would be incapable of appreciating. Suffice it that it was of the datura family, which supplies deadly poisons as well as powerful medicines. I had received one of the earliest specimens, and I desired my name to be associated with the first exploration of its properties. I gave it two men, Ware and Aldridge. I gave it in what I thought was a safe dose. They were patients, you understand, in my ward in a public hospital. Both were found dead in the morning.

"I had given it secretly. None knew of it. There was no scandal, for they were both very ill, and their death seemed natural. But in my own heart I had fears. I believed that I had killed them. It has always been a dark background to my life. You heard yourselves to-night that it was from the disease, and not from the drug, that they died."

"Poor dad!" whispered Enid, patting the great hirsute hand. "Poor dad! What you must have suffered!"

Challenger was too proud a man to stand pity, even from his own daughter. He pulled away his hand.

"I worked for science," he said. "Science must take risks. I do not know that I am to blame. And yet—and yet—my heart is very light to-night."

## XVII.

### WHERE THE MISTS CLEAR AWAY.

MALONE had lost his billet and had found his way in Fleet Street blocked by the rumour of his independence. His place upon the staff had been taken by a young and drunken Jew, who had at once won his spurs by a series of highly humorous articles upon psychic matters, peppered with assurances that he approached the subject with a perfectly open and impartial mind. His final device of offering five thousand pounds if the spirits of the dead would place the first three horses in the coming Derby, and his demonstration that ectoplasm was in truth the froth of bottled porter artfully concealed by the medium, are newspaper stunts which are within the recollection of the reader.

But the path which closed on one side had opened on the other. Challenger, lost in his daring dreams and ingenious experiments, had long needed an active, clear-headed man to manage his business interests and to control his world-wide patents. There were many devices, the fruits of his life's work, which brought in income, but had to be carefully watched and guarded. His automatic alarm for ships in shallow waters, his device for deflecting a torpedo, his new and economical method of separating nitrogen from the air, his radical improvements in wireless transmission, and his novel treatment of pitch-blende were all money-makers. Enraged by the attitude of Cornelius, the Professor placed the management of all these in the hands of his prospective son-in-law, who diligently guarded his interests.

Challenger had himself altered. His colleagues, and those about him, observed the change without clearly perceiving the cause. He was a gentler, humbler, and more spiritual man. Deep in his soul was the conviction that he, the champion of scientific method and of truth, had, in fact, for many years been unscientific in his methods and a formidable obstruction to the advance of the human soul through the jungle of the unknown. It was this self-condemnation which had wrought the change in his character. Also with characteristic energy he had plunged into the wonderful literature of the subject, and as, without the prejudice which had formerly darkened his brain, he read the illuminating testimony of Hare, de Morgan, Crookes, Lombroso, Barrett, Lodge, and so many other great men, he marvelled that he could ever for one instant have imagined that such a consensus of opinion could be founded upon error. His violent and whole-hearted nature made him take up the psychic cause with the same vehemence, and even occasionally the same intolerance, with which he had once denounced it, and the old lion bared his teeth and roared back at those who had

once been his associates. His remarkable article in *The Spectator* began: "The obtuse incredulity and stubborn unreason of the prelates who refused to look through the telescope of Galileo and to observe the moons of Jupiter have been far transcended in our own days by those noisy controversialists who rashly express extreme opinions upon those psychic matters which they have never had either the time or the inclination to examine. . . ." While in a final sentence he expressed his conviction that his opponents "did not in truth represent the thought of the twentieth century, but might rather be regarded as mental fossils dug from some early Pliocene horizon." Critics raised their hands in horror, as is their wont, against the robust language of the article, though violence of attack has for so many years been condoned in the case of those who are in opposition. So we may leave Challenger, his black mane slowly turning to grey, but his great brain growing ever stronger and more virile as it faced such problems as the future had in store, a future which had ceased to be bounded by the narrow horizon of death, and which now stretched away into the infinite possibilities and developments of continued survival of personality, character, and work.

THE marriage had taken place. It was a quiet function, but no prophet could ever have foretold the guests whom Enid's father had assembled in the Whitehall Rooms. They were a happy crowd, all welded together by the opposition of the world and united in one common knowledge. There was the Rev. Charles Mason, who had officiated at the ceremony, and if ever a saint's blessing consecrated a union, so it had been that morning. Now in his black garb, with his cheery toothsome smile, he was moving about among the crowd carrying peace and kindliness with him. The yellow-bearded Mailey, the old warrior, scarred with many combats and eager for more, stood beside his wife, the gentle squire who bore his weapons and nerved his arm. There was Dr. Maupuis from Paris, trying to make the waiter understand that he wanted coffee, and being presented with toothpicks, while the gaunt Lord John Roxton viewed his efforts with cynical amusement. There, too, was the good Bolsover with several of the Hammersmith circle, and Tom Linden with his wife, and Smith, the fighting bulldog from the North, and Dr. Atkinson, and Marvin, the psychic editor, with his kind wife, and the two Ogilvys, and little Miss Delicia with her bag and her tracts, and Dr. Ross Scotton, now successfully cured, and Dr. Felkin, who had cured him so far as his earthly representative, Nurse Ursula, could fill his place. All these and many more were visible to our two-inch spectrum of colour, and audible to our three octaves of sound. How many others, outside those narrow limitations, may have added their presence and their blessing—who shall say?

"Tell me, Enid," said Malone, "of all our wonderful psychic experiences, which is now most vivid in your mind?"

ONE last scene before we close the record. It was in a sitting-room of the Imperial Hotel at Folkestone. At the window sat Mr. and Mrs. Edward Malone, gazing westwards down Channel at an angry evening sky. Great purple tentacles, threatening forerunners from what lay unseen and unknown beyond the horizon, were writhing up towards the zenith. Below the little Dieppe boat was panting eagerly homewards. Far out the great ships were keeping mid-Channel as scenting danger to come. The vague threat of that menacing sky acted subconsciously upon the minds of both of them.

"Tell me, Enid," said Malone, "of all our wonderful psychic experiences, which is now most vivid in your mind?"

"It is curious that you should ask, Ned, for I was thinking of it at that moment. I suppose it was the association of ideas with that terrible sky. It was of Miromar I was thinking, the strange mystery man with his words of doom."

"And so was I."

"Have you heard of him since?"

"Once, and once only. It was on a Sunday morning in Hyde Park. He was speaking to a little group of men. I mixed with the crowd and listened. It was the same warning."

"How did they take it? Did they laugh?"

"Well, you have seen and heard him. You could not laugh, could you?"

"No, indeed. But you don't take it seriously, Ned, do you? Look at the solid old earth of England. Look at our great hotel and the people on the Leas, and the stodgy morning papers, and all the settled order of a civilized land. Do you really think that anything could come to destroy it all?"

"Who knows? Miromar is not the only one who says so."

"Does he call it the end of the world?"

"No, no; it is the rebirth of the world—of the true world, the world as God meant it to be."

"It is a tremendous message. But what is amiss? Why should so dreadful a Judgment fall?"

"It is the materialism, the wooden formalities of the churches, the alienation of all spiritual impulses, the denial of the Unseen, the ridicule of this new revelation—these are the causes according to him."

"Surely the world has been worse before now?"

"But never with the same advantages—never with the education and knowledge and so-called civilization, which should have led it to higher things. Look how everything has been turned to evil. We got the knowledge of airships. We bomb cities with them. We learn how to steam under the sea. We murder seamen with our new knowledge. We gain command over chemicals. We turn them into explosives or poison-gases. It goes from bad to worse. At the present moment every nation upon earth is plotting secretly how it can best poison the others. Did God create the planet for this end, and is it likely that He will allow it to go on from bad to worse?"

"Is it you or Miromar who is talking now?"

"Well, I have myself been brooding over the matter, and all my thoughts seem to justify his conclusions. I read a spirit message which Charles Mason wrote. It was: 'The most dangerous condition for a man or a nation is when his intellectual side is more developed than his spiritual.' Is that not exactly the condition of the world to-day?"

"And how will it come?"

"Ah, there I can only take Miromar's word for it. He speaks of a breaking of all the phials. There are war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, tidal waves—all ending in peace and glory unutterable."

The great purple streamers were right across the sky. A dull crimson glare, a lurid angry glow, was spreading in the West. Enid shuddered as she watched it.

"One thing we have learned," said he; "it is that two souls, where real love exists, go on and on without a break through all the spheres. Why, then, should you and I fear death, or anything which life or death can bring?"

She smiled and put her hand in his.

"Why, indeed?" said she.

THE END.

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*Readers will be interested to know that Sir A. Conan Doyle is now writing some*

**NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES,**

*which will appear in "The Strand Magazine" in due course.*

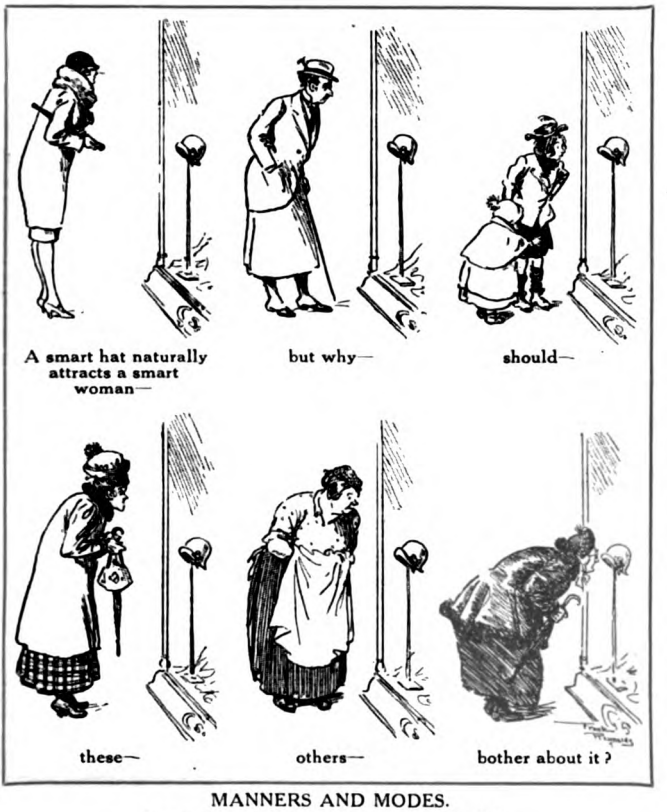
# "THE ETERNAL FEMININE" IN HUMOUR

LE MOT JUSTE.

**Flapper (to man who at great personal risk has rescued her from drowning): "Ta!"**

*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

IN these days of frank friendship between the sexes it is only natural that a considerable proportion of the pictorial satires which appear in the humorous journals should be directed against feminine foibles. For the modern man demands that the woman who stands at his side in work and sport must possess, before all things, sufficient sense of humour to be able to appreciate a joke against herself or her sex. And the girl of to-day has learned from experience that the man who makes fun of her faults is often a far better companion than he who is over-lavish with his praises of her virtues.




MANNERS AND MODES.

*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

In support of this theory it may be mentioned that the accompanying drawings—all of which are pleasantly free from cynicism—are, with one exception, the work of married men. We will leave it to our lady readers to guess which illustration is the work of the single exception.

We do not propose here to trace the development of the feminine in humour from the moment when Eve first uttered the eternal plea that she had "nothing to

July 7th.—"That well-known leader of fashion, the Baroness Czikovsky, was noticed going down to bathe in a wonderful creation."—*Our Correspondent at a smart seaside resort.*

July 14th.—"That celebrated leader of fashion, the Baroness Czikovsky, was noticed going down to bathe in a wonderful creation."—*Our Correspondent at the same resort.*

THE GENTLE ART OF SNOB-SNUBBING.
*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

wear," nor shall we attempt to moralize upon a theme which has pervaded the literature of all ages.

Our purpose is merely to show the various aspects of an ever-fascinating subject as reflected in picture, anecdote, and epigram.

"The woman is so hard upon the woman," wrote Tennyson; yet her hardness is often expressed in honeyed words, as is revealed by the following story.

Two girls passed a third in the street.

"There goes Dick's latest flame," said one. "What do you think of her?"

"Oh, quite nice," said the other.

"I don't like her either," replied the first.

Another concerns a chorus-girl who had just become engaged, and was proudly displaying her ring to the envious eyes of the other ladies in the dressing-room.

"How lovely!" exclaimed one, gushingly. 'Tell me—when is it coming off?"

The wit which woman sometimes directs against the opposite sex can, however, be equally subtle.

A typical story is that of the selfish husband who, having decided to mend his ways, arrived home one evening with a parcel under his arm.

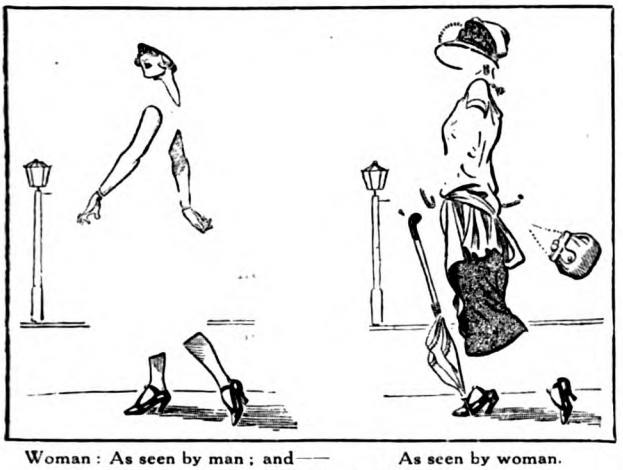
"Who is that for?" asked his young wife, pertly.

"For the one I love best of all," he replied.

"Oh," said the girl, in a tone of disappointment, "I thought perhaps it was something for me."

Woman's skill in handling her men-folk has long been the theme of many clever studies both in drama and in fiction. The subject also has its place in epigram

Bored Maiden (disappointed in a Museum as a place of entertainment): "Oh, Bert, if they only cleared these figures away, wouldn't it make a lovely Palay de Dance?"
*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*



Woman: As seen by man; and—— As seen by woman.

*By permission of "London Opinion."*

and anecdote. Here is just one example.

A woman of the world was asked whether she had a regular dress allowance or just wheedled what she could out of her husband. "Both," she replied laconically.

The subject of dress and fashion has, of course, an important place in the humour of femininity, but since most of the stories, like the fashions themselves, are "dated" it is advisable to quote only one or two recent examples.

Perhaps the most amusing of these is the story of the small boy who was lost in the streets of London.

"Why didn't you hold on to your mother's skirt?" asked a kindly policeman.

"Boo-hoo!" cried the child. "I — I couldn't reach it!"

Another concerns a cynical shop-walker who, when a customer announced that she required a frock 'in the very latest fashion," replied:—

"Certainly; would moddam prefer it to be too tight, or too short?"

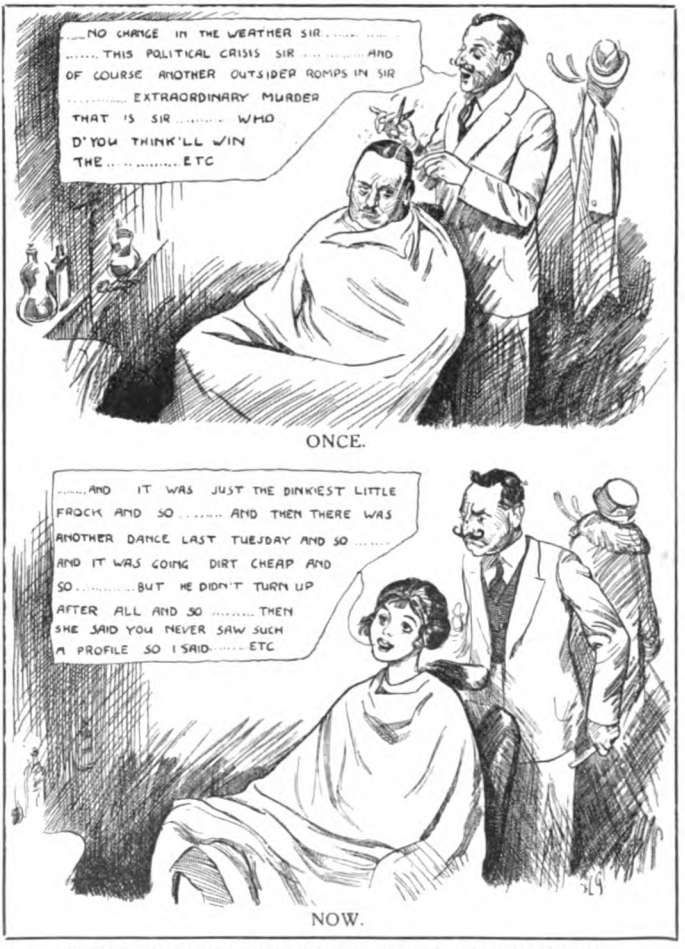
Feminine logic—or the lack of it—is another subject at which satirists delight in poking fun.

An example of a disarmingly illogical reply is contained in the story of the young wife who, whilst partnering her husband at cards, asked him, "What are trumps?" no fewer than four times during the playing of one hand.

When he administered a gentle rebuke, she replied, indignantly:—

"Well, darling, you want me to take an interest in the game, don't you?"

As a famous Frenchman once wrote: "Those who always speak well of women do not know them sufficiently; those




TIME'S REVENGES, OR LOQUACITY AT THE BARBER'S.

*By permission of "The Humorist."*

INSULT TO INJURY.

**Very Late Arrival (who has trodden on her neighbour's foot and generally disarranged him in passing): "I say, you might tell me all about it as far as they've got."**

*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

matter—it doesn't show," was her reply.

Another charming young lady attended the races for the first time in her life, and begged her escort to explain to her the intricacies of betting.

"Well, I will give you an example," he said. "If you put a shilling on a horse and the horse wins at twenty to one, you win twenty shillings. Again, if the horse wins at ten to one you win ten shillings. Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, perfectly," replied the girl. Then, after a pause, she asked: "Tell me, what should I get if it started at a quarter to one?"

who always speak ill of them do not know them at all."

We will conclude, therefore, with one or two stories of delightful *naïveté* which contain no sting.

Typically feminine is that of the girl on the Atlantic liner who, noticing that the vessel had stopped in mid-ocean, anxiously inquired the cause.

"I'm sorry to say we've had the misfortune to break one of our propellers," the Captain told her.

"Oh, well, that won't

**We suggest to the managers of our large emporiums that they should provide referees at sales to determine the disputed ownership of purchases.**

*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

**Town Maiden: "Which had we better do—just hurry past, or offer them some chocolates?"**

*By permission of "The Humorist."*

# Funeral March

## By STACY AUMONIER

*ILLUSTRATED BY F. MATANIA, R.I.*

SHE was a woman with a genius for apparent helplessness. She drifted around the veranda of the Hotel Reina Christa like an autumn leaf, and like an autumn leaf she was for ever changing her hue. She was always wearing different-coloured cloaks and shawls which other people had to fetch for her. Not only men, but women. She was so helpless, you see. To me she was like a white flower, which one is only conscious of at night. One associated her with the night: the dead white face, with the little flick of carmine on the lips, the blue-black hair, and those large, dark, appealing eyes. She was always appealing, appealing for sympathy and understanding—and anything else. She seemed to give out nothing of herself. She was nebulous. But in my whole life I have never met anyone such a complete mistress of the verb to "schwärm." It is a pity there is no real translation for this word, for she embodied it in her every phrase and movement. The women, who were for the most part middle-aged English and American women, staying there for health or pleasure, entirely succumbed to her. They found her most fascinating. She certainly could be amusing at times, and she had travelled a lot, and seen sides of life that appeared entirely romantic and remote to most of them. Moreover, she was Russian, which means so much when you are susceptible to mystic influences.

The men, I noticed, were a little afraid of her; but as they were men whose activities centred principally around golf and bridge, it is not surprising. They did not like being asked about their souls, and when their physical beauty was praised openly before a crowd of people they felt self-conscious. But some of them seemed to like to sit and talk with her—alone.

To that frumpy old Mrs. Wyatt she would exclaim: "Oh, my darling, how *beautiful* you look to-night! You must always wear cerise and black. What exquisite pearls! They are like your eyes, floating in the ether."

To little Mrs. Champneys she would say:—"Oh, my darling, come and talk to me! I am *so* lonely! You are *so* sympathetic!"

And she would tell Mrs. Champneys all about her dear beloved husband, who she said had been a great musician, and had died many years ago. She would sap this poor little woman's nervous vitality with her moving stories of love and death and passion, with her tales of suffering, interlarded with little flicks of cynical humour.

She was never so happy as when surrounded by some dozen of the hotel *habitués* listening to her stories or absorbing her charm.

It was during one of these occasions that I noticed a strange little occurrence. The evening train used to come in while the guests were at dinner, consequently the new arrivals usually dined alone, and either did or did not join the others afterwards.

I was seated in a chair on the veranda facing the dining-room obliquely. Mme. Vieninoff was the centre of an admiring group, as usual. I had never heard her so entertaining. The French door to the dining-room was open, and I observed an elderly, distinguished-looking man with white hair and a pointed beard—one of the late-comers—dining alone. He was obviously tired from a long journey and in need of his dinner, which he enjoyed with the quiet satisfaction of a gourmet. He was nearing the end, and had raised a glass of wine to

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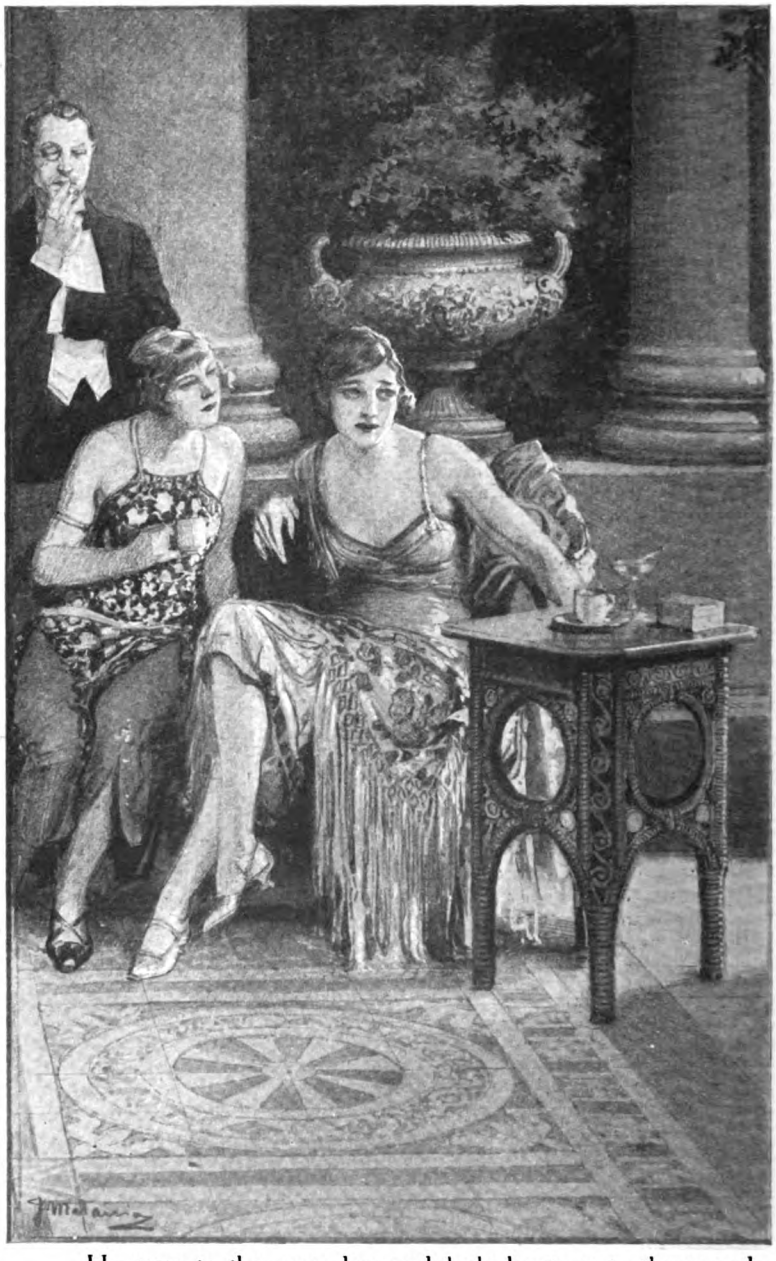
his lips, when I suddenly observed him stop, as though listening. He put the glass down and frowned perplexedly, as though trying to associate what he was listening to with some past connection. Then he finished his wine and pondered. After a few more minutes he stood up and came to the open door where I was sitting and looked out on to the veranda at the group of people. I saw his eye alight on Mme. Vieninoff, and a curious cynical smile twisted his lips. He returned to finish his dinner. I could not see in the dim light whether she had observed him, but I noticed as he went back that she was laughing rather hysterically at some reminiscence that she had herself been recounting. Then she became curiously subdued.

When the elderly gentleman came out to partake of his coffee and cognac, Mme. Vieninoff had retired. She said the night was oppressive, and was affecting her nerves. I thought to myself: "Ho, ho!" which is another way of saying that we all love a mystery.



He came to the open door and looked out on to the veranda. smile twisted

I made a point of engaging the newcomer in conversation, although, of course, it was impossible at the moment to talk about Mme. Vieninoff. He was a quiet, cultivated Frenchman, prepared to be friendly, but not too communicative—not a man to be rushed or cross-examined. We retired early.

THE next two days wrought an extraordinary change in Mme. Vieninoff. There was no disguising it. She still drifted about the veranda, but it was in a furtive, uncertain manner. She appeared

I saw his eye alight on Mme. Vieninoff, and a curious cynical his lips.

petulant, and no one could get a smile out of her. She was obviously, moreover, in dread of finding herself in the presence of this new arrival. She kept her room for hours, and sent her maid for time-tables, or to make inquiries at the bureau about the departure of trains to here, there, and everywhere. Which was surprising, as she had told everyone that she meant to winter at the Reina Christa. The poor woman was in great distress, and it became apparent to my friend, whose name I discovered to be Louis Denoyel. Everyone observed that Mme. Vieninoff was not herself, but I doubt whether anyone else except myself associated her agitation with the arrival of M. Denoyel. On the third afternoon she came on to the veranda, where I was drinking coffee with Denoyel. She glanced at us and darted away.

Denoyel frowned, and the cynical smile left his face. He stroked his beard, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered :—

"Perhaps it's too bad! After all, she's a woman!"

He looked up at me quizzically, and I said :—

"All of which I find intriguing."

He thought for a long while. Then he took out a visiting-card, wrote something on it, and rang the bell for the waiter. When the waiter came he said :—

"Bring me an envelope, please, and I would like you to take this message to Mme. Vieninoff."

The waiter was away for nearly five minutes, and I sat there anxiously hoping that my friend would show me what was written on the card. He was amused at my curiosity, and in a sudden whim he handed it across to me, without a word. On it was written in French :—

"*Do not be alarmed. I am leaving to-morrow morning.—L. D.*"

When the waiter had taken the message, I said:—

"Well, sir, you cannot leave it at that."

He lightly beat a tattoo on the table with his left hand, and then he said:—

"No, I suppose, having gone so far, I must tell you the whole thing. But wait till this evening, and we will go out for a stroll along the bay."

The night was warm and fine, and seated on the carcass of a fallen pine-tree at the edge of the dunes, just above the bay, M. Denoyel told me this story.

"IT'S a strange story," he said, "because it is a series of contradictions. But all true stories manage somehow or other to contradict themselves; life is like that, I suppose.

"In the days when the ill-fated Romanoffs flourished and Imperial Russia was a force to be reckoned with, Serge Vieninoff was a musician of some repute in Petersburg. He was inclined to be lazy and had accomplished nothing very distinguished, but people were beginning to talk of his future. He had a considerable private fortune, and kept up a certain amount of style in the most fashionable quarter of the city. He was popular, amiable, and cultured. And then one day he met and fell in love with Wanda Karrienski. She was the daughter of a small innkeeper, and was at that time serving as a manicurist in one of the big stores. That is our friend across the way."

And M. Denoyel nodded in the direction of the Reina Christa, whose lights were reflected upon the still surface of the bay.

"She was of the clinging, helpless, passionate kind, exuding an atmosphere of ingenuousness, but, as you yourself may easily divine, not quite so ingenuous, indeed not quite so helpless, as she appears. She made every kind of apparent protest against marrying the aristocratic Serge. She was of a different class, unworthy, too unsophisticated, and all that kind of thing. Oh, she did the thing well. It was just the kind of attitude which infatuated the musician. He would have none of it, and he married her.

"Now you can imagine, coming from the hard conditions in which she had been brought up, and the struggle and indignity of her calling—for you must realize that a female manicurist in Petersburg in those days did not hold the same kind of position as a manicurist holds in London or New York. Her work was mostly connected with young officers—suddenly finding herself the mistress of a large and fashionable household, and the legitimate wife of a distinguished and wealthy man—well, what could you expect?

"It was the kind of thing she had dreamed of and read about in cheap novels, but never considered realizable. And suddenly the dream came true. She adapted herself to these conditions like a duck to water. As you may observe, she is still by no means unlovely, and in those days she was an extremely pretty woman. Moreover, she had a certain native wit, and that most invaluable asset to any woman—the genius of knowing exactly how to dress. In spite of her lowly birth, Vieninoff's friends quickly absorbed her. She became popular and sought after. Her life became one round of dissipation, balls, theatres, dinners, sleigh rides, receptions, and all the gay things which a woman of her nature craves for. Vieninoff couldn't live up to it. He was a dreamer, absorbed in his work; and for the most part he let her go her own way, although devoted to her.

"There were two years of this, and then suddenly—biff! War, revolution, fall of the monarchy, counter revolution, defeat, ruin! The whole edifice fell to the ground, and among the *débris* wandered the disconsolate figures of Vieninoff and his wife. He was ruined. The house and furniture were seized by the Bolshevik Government, his property was confiscated. Scraping together whatever they could out of the shambles, they managed eventually to reach Paris, with a few thousand francs between them and actual starvation.

"They rented two rooms in a meagre little street just off the Rue des Écoles. It was a wretched place, insufferably hot in the summer, perishingly cold in the winter. But Mr. Vieninoff was a man of spirit. He got together the few treasures they had saved out of the wreck, and spent a portion of his small capital in hiring an upright piano. 'I will teach,' he said. 'I will write and make money. I will rise like a Phœnix. Courage, my little cabbage!'

"To Wanda it was—just hell! For a time she appeared dazed by the whole thing. She had been genuinely frightened, and experienced a certain sense of relief in escaping with her life. But when she began to settle down and realize the situation, her reactions were violent. She found herself cooped up in these two wretched rooms with a man who did nothing but tinkle on a piano, or scribble on sheets of paper. She wandered the streets and found a city larger and gayer than Petersburg. She saw magnificent shops, motor-cars, restaurants, theatres, cabarets, and dancing halls. She saw gay parties of people on their way to these places, and the sight made her eat her heart out. She did not believe in her

husband or his ridiculous music. She felt she had been deceived and wronged. She turned against him, and vent all her pent-up spleen upon the unfortunate musician. 'I married an old fool,' she would tell him. 'Oh, my God! all my brilliance thrown away on a nincompoop who thinks he's a genius! Oh, fool that I am!'

"Vieninoff struggled on. He managed to get a few pupils, sons and daughters of tradespeople, who paid badly and were very stupid. They came and went, came and went. He just managed to pay the rent, and buy the barest necessities of life for them both. When not teaching he spent his whole time trying to compose, and for this reason he was happier than his wife. She did nothing but sit about, nag her husband, and urge him to get work that brought in more money.

"He was always optimistic. He believed that better times would come, that he would be appreciated, but nothing happened. The years went by, and their position became only worse. And then Mr. Vieninoff began to cough. And he coughed, and coughed, and something told him that the end was not far off, and the knowledge brought with it an element of relief. For as he coughed so did Wanda become more intolerant and abusive. It was bad enough to have a poor husband, but a sick one was even worse.

"She began to prepare for her husband's death. When he died she would sell that wretched piano and the few sticks of furniture, burn his musical manuscripts, and try to get back to her beloved Russia. Or perhaps she would marry again, a rich man this time and a brilliant one. Perhaps she would stop in Paris. There were many rich men in Paris—Americans, English, Italian. What did it matter? She had not yet lost her looks. She became quite eager for her husband's death. She even did not hesitate to discuss it with him, to gibe at him, and ask him what provision he had made when he deserted her!"

M. DENOYEL threw the stump of his cigar far away across the sand with an angry gesture. It whipped the night air like a firefly, and settled behind some scrub. Then leaning forward on his stick he continued:—

"Vieninoff had been very good to his wife. In the early days he had loved her passionately. When everything went wrong he had stuck to her. In their material distress he had thought more of her than of himself. When they were practically starving it was never she who went without. But lying on his bed towards the end of his days he suddenly realized with vivid intensity the kind of woman she was. A slow anger and resentment began to burn within him. In fair weather she had been all smiles and charm, in foul she proved herself utterly callous and heartless. He felt a desire to punish her in some way. But what could he do? It was perhaps bad enough to leave her nearly penniless. That alone would have been intolerable if she had loved him and been good to him. But he knew that when he died she would not be penniless for long. She was not that kind of woman. She would dance upon his grave. She would forget him, or cherish his memory as an ugly nightmare. Lying there in the darkness he went over and over again the tragic horror of the situation. It stirred him at strange angles. It even aroused the musician in him. Sombre musical phrases pounded through his brain. *He would write his own funeral march!* Moreover, it should be played at his own funeral at all costs. The idea fascinated him—a dignified gesture with which to leave the world. The thought almost made him chuckle with anticipation and glee.

"When she asked him the next day what he was doing he replied: 'I'm writing my masterpiece.' She sneered at him and went out. Mr. Vieninoff was very busy for weeks after that. He never left his room. And then one day he pulled himself together, and, putting on an old hat on which the dust was very thick, he crawled out and visited a notary in an adjoining street. 'I want to make my will,' he said. He gave a careful detailed list of all his belongings, and explained that on his death these were to be immediately sold and the money set aside to defray the expenses of a band employed to accompany him to the grave. And the band was to play his own funeral march.

"'Yes,' said the notary. 'And what about your wife?'

"'I leave her the residue of the estate,' he said, with a low chuckle.

"'And what does that amount to?'

"Mr. Vieninoff shrugged his shoulders.

"'Oh,' he replied, 'there are my manuscripts.'

"The notary probably thought he was a lunatic. But there it is. The law's the law. The will was duly drawn up and signed. Having accomplished this feat, Mr. Vieninoff's grip on life appeared to cease. He died quietly one evening a few weeks later. He was quite alone when the end came, his wife being out at a cabaret with a woman friend."

M. Denoyel lighted another cigar. The windows of some of the upper rooms at the Reina Christa were beginning to add their reflections to the pattern on the bay, suggesting that the early people were already

retiring. The deep melodious cry of a brown owl reached us from a long way off across the dunes. My informant coughed, and appeared a little uncertain how to complete the picture he was conjuring up. At last he said :—

" Paris is essentially a city of the unexpected. One should never be surprised at anything one sees or hears there. But Mr. Vieninoff's funeral was surely one of the most surprising spectacles that ever appeared in this surprising city. Mme. Vieninoff had heard nothing about the will, and, as you may imagine, when the notary appeared and read the terms of it to her she was furious. Vieninoff had left her nothing but the premeditated bonfire of his manuscripts. Mme. Myrthil, the landlady of the establishment, declared that in a moment of hysterical rage Mme. Vieninoff had actually struck her dead husband with a roll of music. But let us prefer to believe that this was an exaggeration. In any case, she found herself in a helpless position. M. Pitau, the notary, was a dry old stick, but he was very efficient, and he performed his duties with meticulous care. His trouble was being so pressed for time. It appeared that Mr. Vieninoff had bought the piano on the hire-purchase system, and it was now his property. This, of course, made a considerable difference, and when everything was sold he found that the estate realized several thousand francs. And this money he had to spend on a band !

" A band ! M. Pitau knew nothing about bands. How to hire a band ? So the day before the funeral he went to a friend who conducted an orchestra in a *café* in the Boulevard Poissonnière. This gentleman was a violinist conducting an orchestra of four. But that wasn't sufficient. M. Pitau wanted a *band*, a large band to play a funeral march in the streets. He was prepared to spend several thousand francs. The violinist said good, leave it to him. The next morning there assembled in a little yard off the Rue des Ecoles the strangest band you can possibly imagine. There were the four musicians from the *café* wearing a curious green semi-military fustian which was their accustomed uniform. There were seven or eight students from the Conservatoire with piccolos, clarinets, flutes, and saxophones. There were two drummers from an infantry regiment, and several other odd people who had surely never had a musical instrument in their hands before. The parts were handed round, and, of course, there was no time for a rehearsal.

" When the hearse arrived, the conductor drew his strange company up into some kind of order. The perfectly plain coffin was covered with a black pall on which reposed one wreath of immortelles. There were no mourners, although Mme. Vieninoff followed the band, as though wildly hoping that even yet something might be extracted from this exhibition of lunacy.

" The cavalcade started, and the band struck up. Now the conductor, who played the violin, was some kind of a musician, and he did make a serious attempt to interpret the themes of the dead composer. But the same cannot be said of the others. They began solemnly marching down the Boulevard St. Michel. A crowd quickly began to collect. And everyone was saying, ' Whose funeral is this ? What is this band ? What are they playing ? ' No one could give an answer. By the time they had crossed the river and reached the Grand Boulevards, thousands were following and the band had got quite out of hand. They had entirely lost all sense of a composition. There never was heard such a raging cacophony, such a screaming riot of discord. Long before they reached Montmartre, the students were ragging the whole thing. The saxophone was wailing little bits of jazz, the flute interlarding passages from vulgar popular songs. The people were roaring with laughter, refusing to believe that it was a real funeral at all. It was only the conductor and the two military drummers who lent to the performance any sense of rhythm at all. So great was the congestion that before Montmartre Cemetery was reached a large body of police was telephoned for to keep the people in order. There was very nearly a riot. And in any case it led to an inquiry, which cost the country thousands of francs. And thus it was that poor Mr. Vieninoff went to his last resting-place, and Mme. Vieninoff received her punishment."

M. DENOYEL stood up.

" Let us stroll back," he said, " and I will tell you perhaps the strangest part of the story on the way. The affair, as you may imagine, got into the newspapers. It made what the papers call a 'story,' a good 'story' too. It occupied a prominent place on the front page of not only all the French newspapers, but of the English and American. There was something which captured the imagination in an unknown composer writing his own funeral march, and going to his grave to the strains of it.

" While the public interest was still hot on it, an astute publisher had the wit to publish the composition with the ' story ' printed on the cover. And then, of course, the most surprising thing of all happened. Someone quite by chance showed a copy to M. Taillandier, the conductor of the Philharmonic orchestra. That gentleman glanced

Long before the band reached Montmartre, the students were ragging the whole thing.

through it idly, and then his interest became aroused. He took it home and studied it. And suddenly he exclaimed to his wife: 'But this is a most interesting and original composition!'

"You have already, no doubt, anticipated what was to follow. M. Taillandier sought information about this composer and his work, and he was referred to M. Pitau, who passed him on to the widow. One afternoon he called on Mme. Vieninoff. He found her surveying an enormous mass of music manuscripts piled up on the stove. There were tears of anger in her eye and a box of matches in her hand.

"'What are you doing, madame?' he inquired.

"'I'm trying to destroy the relics of a wasted life,' she blazed at him. 'And the filthy stuff won't burn. It's too thick.'

"M. Taillandier snatched a bundle from the heated stove. The edges of the music were charred. It was his turn to be angry.

"'Imbecile!' he screamed at her.

"She did not, of course, know who he was, and she became even angrier. They had a bad quarter of an hour, till at last he was able to persuade her that the music might not only be good, but it might have some commercial value. This altered the whole case. She allowed him to come later with a secretary and sort the music out. A musical agent was called in to deal with it. M. Taillandier proved himself a sound judge, but he never for a moment anticipated the surprising results of his discovery. A lot of the work was immature, particularly that done during his days of prosperity in Petersburg. But all his later work was surprisingly brilliant. He had written innumerable concertos, symphonies, and sonatas for strings, to say nothing of songs and piano solos. All these were published and performed, and a Vieninoff composition became quite a vogue. But the most profitable discovery for Mme. Vieninoff was that of two light operas. One, called 'Licette'—which he must have written when he was starving—you have probably heard, or heard of. It has been running simultaneously in Boston, Paris, and Vienna for nearly a year. The other is shortly to be produced."

"You mean to say," I ventured, "that Mme. Vieninoff is a comparatively rich woman, all through her husband's despised compositions?"

M. Denoyel shrugged his shoulders. "She winters here at the Reina Christa. She has her own maid. I have met her during the season at Cannes, and Pau, and Seville. She has not yet found it necessary to—marry her rich man."

We were approaching the wrought-iron entrance gate to the hotel.

"There is one mystery I cannot yet understand, monsieur," I said. "How is it that *you* know all the details of this affair?"

He pressed my arm confidentially.

"I was the doctor, monsieur, who attended Vieninoff till the last. He told me all on his death-bed. I had the honour of being the only person to send him a final tribute—a wreath of immortelles. I am the only one who knows the whole truth. It is perhaps for this reason that Mme. Vieninoff is—well, shall I say a little shy in my presence?"

WE walked up the drive, and lo! there on the veranda in her favourite seat was Mme. Vieninoff, surrounded by her satellites. I was conscious of a sudden wave of anger, the kind of anger which youth invariably feels in the face of injustice. She had not seen us, and I turned to my friend and whispered:—

"You could make it very—unpleasant for her."

He smiled, and patted my shoulder.

"She is a woman," he said, as though this laconic phrase were sufficient to dismiss any form of passionate judgment. Then he held out his hand, and added: "Good night. Do not let her disturb your dreams," and he gave me a formal little bow and passed through the door and out of my life.

Disturb my dreams! No, she shouldn't disturb my dreams, but she was seriously disturbing my waking hours. Almost involuntarily I ambled in the direction of the veranda. I sat on a wooden bench below it and I heard her talking, and these were the words which reached me:—

"Ah, my poor dear Serge, there was a genius if ever there was one. Listen, darling; he would never have had the courage to persist had I not so often told him success would one day come to him. We were living in quite humble circumstances in those days, a small flat with only one servant. Poor Serge used to despair, but when things were at their blackest I would take him by the hand and whisper: 'Courage, my dear one; one little step down the fickle road of destiny, and you will be there,' and I would lead him to the piano stool. I was always at his elbow. I was the rock upon which he leant. During those long months when I nursed him night and day he clung to me for support and inspiration. He died in my arms. 'Ah, my wife,' he whispered—and these were his last words—'my wife, my love—my inspiration!' Isn't it wonderful, darling, to have loved like that?"

A woman! Oh, my dear M. Denoyel!

I will not say that he drank the contents, but he emptied them into himself.

# TALENT AND GENIUS

*By*

# BARRY PAIN

*ILLUSTRATED BY D. L. GHILCHIK*

I WENT into the bar soon after twelve that day. I hoped to see Steve, and to talk over things, for it was quite time I began to work again. Meanwhile I had my breakfast—a couple of olives and three dry Martinis. I was never a hog for food.

In came the small stranger, peering round with his little blinking eyes. His clothes were somewhat seedy and had not been made for him, but he was not in rags. I think if Albert, behind the bar, had caught sight of him he'd have got his orders to quit.

The little chap—he was not much over four feet—had got a small portfolio and went along the bar trying to sell photographs of London. I thought to myself that showed some enthusiasm. You see, that bar has its own special patrons—mostly high-class crooks, and a few on the outside fringe of the film industry, and an occasional flavouring of C.I.D. At any rate, we were all baked pretty hard. Most of us were trying to brace ourselves up to be able to face luncheon and the other strenuous work of the day. And the chance of selling a photograph of the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey for the home mantelpiece to anybody in our

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crowd was not worth long and studious consideration.

Some of them took no notice of him whatever; some of them told him to get out. As I watched him, an idea came to me. I crooked my finger, and up he came smiling. Matter of fact, I never saw him when he didn't look good-tempered and happy.

"Nice views of some interesting features of London," he said. "All my own work. Moderate prices."

"Yes," I said. "I heard you say that before. Where's your camera?"

"You can't eat cameras," he said. "I've had to borrow money on it. When I've sold these interesting photographs, I get the camera out again. I've not done much here, though one of those gentlemen gave me a shilling, but I've never tried this place before. Americans are my best market."

"Could you go and photograph a house for me? You'd have to get permission. You probably would get it owing to your small size and your smile."

"Ah, yes, yes! If the terms were——"

"They are. Want a drink?"

"Not to deceive you, sir, and recognizing you to be a gentleman, I will say plainly that I should like a glass of bitter with a dash of gin in it."

The little beggar was so quaint and so good-humoured that he even put me in a good temper.

"Albert," I said, "I've got a little man down here who's thirsty. Put a double gin into a pint tankard and fill up with Scotch ale."

He did, and I handed it down to Mr. Smiler. He raised the tankard towards me in salutation, and then, I will not say that he drank the contents, but he emptied them into himself. The whole lot vanished in one pull. I have no idea where it went to. I'm inclined to think that he must have had hollow legs.

"And very nice, too," he said. "And now, sir, with reference to that house which you wish to have photographed."

"There's no more to say at the moment. You be here to-morrow at the same time. If I'm here I'll give you your instructions. If I'm not, you'll know there's nothing doing."

Off he went, and Steve, who had just come in, came up to me. Steve is a nice man. He is employed professionally as a diamond cutter. He has been in the same place for seven years, and during those seven years he has never cheated his employer out of one farthing. But Steve rather likes to put in a little overtime occasionally on his own account. He came quickly to the point.

"Well, Peter," he said, "got anything in my line?"

"There may be."

"There should be. You've been living in idleness for the last six weeks and spending your money in a silly way, I make no doubt."

"Quite right."

"Well, if you've got anything, what is it?"

I turned to Albert behind the bar.

"Albert," I said, "send a couple of dry Martinis over to the little table in the window. I've got weary of standing up."

So I took Steve off to the little table by the window where one could speak more freely, and gave him the idea.

"Did you ever hear of Sir Evan Battenclough?" I asked.

"Well, yes. At least, I know of the Battenclough diamond. Lives somewhere out beyond Edgware, doesn't he?"

"That's it," I said. "Last night or early this morning I had the pleasure of paying for a lot of drinks at a night club, for Battenclough's butler. He's an interesting man. He tells me the oldest boy is getting married in a week's time. The bride lives at St. Albans and they will be married from her father's house. Battenclough and his wife will drive down to the wedding, dine there, and drive back home afterwards."

"I see. You think she'll wear the Battenclough diamond."

"I'm pretty certain she won't. It's to be a very quiet affair. There won't be more than eight or ten of them at that dinner. The butler's doing a little entertaining on his own account that night while his boss is away. Puts thoughts into your head, doesn't it?"

"What's the house like? Can you manage it?"

"I can't say. I'm sending a man down to photograph it to-morrow for me. You may have seen him just now. He's a simple little beggar and will do what he's told. He's quite a good photographer. Rather a quaint bit of character, too. I'll back him to get in where the regular professional photographer would be thrown out."

"Well, don't expect too much. That diamond will have to be cut into four. It's a lot of work for me and a terrible risk. I'm not at all sure that I like it."

"If you don't like it you can leave it."

"And I wouldn't say that either. But you were always a man who expected too much. There will have to be reasonable limits."

He always talks like that before we do a deal. Still, I want him and he wants me. I'm the only man he deals with, and he'd never dare to get the stuff for himself.

However, with the help of another Martini we fixed up our engagement.

The little man kept his appointment next morning, still smiling, and by way of seeing if he spoke the truth I took him to the place where he said he'd pledged his camera. Everything was correct. The camera was pledged for the exact sum that he told me—ten shillings. It was a good machine and he could have got more for it, but, as he explained, the more he got on it the longer it stopped in. I gave him his instructions and sent him off by train.

Next morning he turned up with six good photographs. One of them showed the approach to the house, and that was useful. Another showed the front of the house. It had a heavy pillared porch which was really almost like an invitation. I felt that Sir Evan might as well have done his diamond up in a registered package and sent it to me by post.

The little man seemed to have had quite a good time at the Battencloughs'. Not only did he get the permission he wanted, but they gave him a good square meal in the servants' hall as well. He was able to tell me several little things that I wanted to know. I pitched him a yarn that I was collecting photographs of English country houses and that I had not been able to get permission to send a photographer to Battenclough's. But the little man was not at all curious. He seemed to take everything for granted. He lowered two pints with the same ease and rapidity with which he had previously lowered one, so probably both his legs were hollow. And he seemed quite satisfied with the pound that I paid him. He said that he hoped God would bless and prosper me, and off he went. I never asked him his name and he never asked me mine.

Well, the night came. I went out on a little two-seater and parked it out of sight in a field. At half-past eight I was walking round the house. Festivities had begun downstairs, and so far as I could see through one of the basement windows the servants were all there and thoroughly enjoying themselves. So there was no reason to waste time. I shinned up on to the top of the porch as quickly as I could, pushed back the catch of the window, and soon found my way to Lady Battenclough's bedroom. Now I do not expect to be believed, but it is the solemn truth that the key had been left in the safe built into the wall of that room. I had only to open the door. There was plenty of stuff there, but I wasted no time over it. I took the diamond in its little leather case, slipped it into my pocket, and made off. It was without exception the very easiest piece of work I ever did in my life. I was back in my motor-car and on my way home before nine o'clock. I was in rather a hurry to get back, for I had got a lot of hair stuck all over my face, and wanted to be quit of it.

I slowed up as I got into Hendon, and down a side street into the main road came staggering a very little man carrying a very big camera. He was not drunk, but his manner of walking certainly suggested that he had had some. Everything had gone well and I was at peace with all mankind. Also, I was curious to see if he would penetrate my disguise. So I pulled up.

"Want a lift into London?" I said.

"Thank you very much indeed," he said. "I came into Hendon this afternoon to take photographs of some of my friends here and they pressed me to stay to supper. I'm afraid I've somewhat exceeded. If you would put me down at Cricklewood, that is quite near my house. Thank you very much."

He climbed in and promptly fell on the top of me. I steered him into a seat and put his camera in a safe place for him. He talked all the time I was driving, and I must say that the little beggar kept me amused. I decided that he had not recognized me. He certainly gave no sign of it.

I had no suspicion at all. I took a bath and changed into evening clothes to go on to the night club where I was to meet Steve, and it was only then that I began to go through the pockets of the suit I had been wearing at Edgware. The small leather case with the Battenclough diamond in it was not there. I hunted around, thinking it just possible that it might have fallen out. It was not until I had gone over every inch of the room and over the car in which I had travelled that I came to the conclusion that it had been taken from me.

There was only one man who could have taken it.

I WAS ashamed of myself. I tried to think out some story that would save my face which I could dare to tell Steve. Finally I decided not to save my face and to tell him the plain truth. I did.

Steve is, as I think I have already said, a nice man. He does regular work for six hours a day, and he honestly does it. I do not know why. After the six hours he is as good a man to whom to take a stolen diamond as I know, or as you may be able to find. I've often suspected him of spending a good deal of time in thinking, and it may be that I was right. At any rate, when I had finished my story he neither cursed me nor laughed at me.

"Yes," he said, "long ago I saw this man would arrive one day—the man who

makes it by stealing from thieves. He's on velvet, he is. He has no fear of the police and need have none. No doubt there are plenty of people about who would put a knife or a bullet through him on sight, even if they knew they had to swing for it afterwards. But he plays a lone hand, has no accomplices, works Europe and America as well as this country, and is not easy to find. He's been at it two years now. The last *coup*—before he had you—was to take five thousand in bank-notes, the numbers of which were not known, from the con-

"Want a lift into London?" I said.

fidence man who had just got them. I should call him a very clever little man."

"He's a dirty little tyke, and I'll break his neck the next time I see him."

"I don't think you'll see him again. He doesn't want you. He's got what you had. When you've sucked the juice of the orange you don't take any special trouble about the skin. I say the little chap's clever. He takes advantage of his small size to get you and your swell crowd to despise him. He takes advantage of the fact that a thief is never more triumphant and never more careless than when he has just got away with the goods. That's the moment when a baby can play with him. Mind. I don't

want to run you down at all. You have your gifts, you've got talent. But that little chap has got genius.

"Just consider. You may be quite certain he knew all about that bar and what sort of a crowd he would find in it. He wanted something which would take him the whole length of the bar, moving not too quickly. So he sold photographs of the Tower of London and such-like junk. He couldn't be bowled out, mind you. He really could photograph. He really had pawned his camera, and he must have laughed when he did it. He'd got his own story quite solid. Of course, the luck was with him in finding you, because you're cleverer than some and make the mistake of thinking you're cleverer than the rest. When you sent him down to Battenclough's place to photograph it he knew all he wanted to know. He'd heard of the Battenclough diamond. He knew of the approaching marriage—it was in all the papers. And from that time forward he played you as an angler plays a fish, and he's got you lying on the bank and gasping your life out."

"I take it, then, that this is not the first time you've come across the little worm?"

"No. I've come on his work, or traces of it, two or three times. Long before that I saw he would happen some day—the man who realized that it was just as easy to steal from the thief as from the mug, and a great deal safer. You look despondent, my friend. Suppose we take a glass of champagne?"

"Suppose we do," I assented. "All the same, that won't alter the impression I've formed that that little blighter, that two-pennyworth of tripe, has taken away my nerve and my self-respect and rendered me unfitted for the business. One more shock like this and I shall be driven into the paths of honesty."

*We shall publish from time to time further stories by Mr. Barry Pain, demonstrating that "It is just as easy to steal from a thief as from a mug—and a great deal safer."*

# ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 152.

PARENT and child we show you here to-day;
Lawless and stern the parent, so they say:
The child, though pure, full often will deceive
Poor simple folk, too eager to believe.

1. Might have a Latin end, or meaning, though
There'd be no object in it then, you know.
2. Mixture of noise and cash, which, being guessed,
Thoughts of the moon may very well suggest.
3. How many finals does the whole contain?
Remove initial, and the answer's plain.
4. Same as before, our word should come to mind,
Though here it is without a head, we find.
5. Write down this light; now double it: why, see!
The answer is as plain as plain can be.
6. Full many a steamer here comes into sight,
And so, fast following, gives the very light.
7. You don't know this? I'm not surprised, I'm sure!
Less than a dozen often make a score.
8. You may not quite succeed in this to-day,
But if you try to more than once, you may.
9. Part of an institution; 'twould appear
The whole is half what's left; reverse it here.

VIPER.

*Answers to Acrostic No. 152 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on March 12th.*

*Two answers may be sent to every light.*

*It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 151.

*(The Third of the Series.)*

A POET died; in memory
A poet wrote an elegy.

1. They tell of wood and shade; but still,
Made hot, they tell of camp and drill.
2. A trench. What has to be in time,
If it would save, provides a rhyme.
3. Abandoned one! And here one reads
How one its anagram succeeds.
4. A Standard holds no longer sway—
'Tis Twentieth Century to-day.
5. A coin, a messenger divine,
Winged innocence adorning shrine.
6. The family here comes in sight,
The lady is quite definite.
7. A sudden outburst, sudden start,
She is the darling of my heart.

PAX.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A | lder | S |
| 2. D | itc | H |
| 3. O | enon | E |
| 4. N | uttal | L |
| 5. A | nge | L |
| 6. I | ssu | E |
| 7. S | all | Y |

NOTES.—Light 1. Aldershot. 2. A stitch in time. 4. Nuttall's Standard Dictionary and the Twentieth Century Dictionary. 6. One word, and two. 7. Sally in our alley.

"Skates" and "Sculls" are accepted for the last light of No. 149.

Solvers who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should, with their letters, enclose stamped addressed envelopes, and he will endeavour to reply.

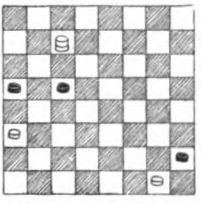
# PERPLEXITIES.

## By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

### 790.—EASY DRAUGHTS.

As readers seem to have been interested in the occasional Draughts problems that I have given in these pages, I will now present to them another ot

BLACK.—3 pieces.



WHITE.—3 pieces.

White to play and win.

these elementary examples, for their consideration. Beginners will find it a very practical and instructive study in Draughts strategy. It is the composition of Mr. W. Beattie.

### 791.—AN OLD CHARADE.

My *first* is equality.
My *second* is inferiority.
My *whole* is superiority.

### 792.—DIGITAL ARITHMETIC.

In the following line all the nine digits are each represented by the capital letters once only :—

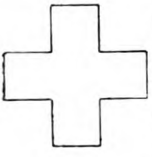
£A Bs. Cd. × DE = £FG. Hs. Kd.

The nought is not used. Can you translate it into figures? To make it perfectly clear, the following would be a correct solution if the multiplier 8 had been a two-figure number and the shillings in the product a single-figure number :—

£3 7s. 5d. × 8 = £26 19s. 4d.

It is certainly possible of solution, because I have an answer before me, but whether it is capable or not of other answers I have not determined.

### 793.—A NEW CROSS PUZZLE.



Here is a new Greek cross puzzle that will be found quite easy in its class. Cut a symmetrical Greek cross, similar to the illustration, into five pieces, so that one piece shall be a smaller symmetrical Greek cross, entire, and so that the remaining four pieces will fit together and form a perfect square.

### 794.—DOMINO SEQUENCES.

A boy, who had a complete set of Dominoes, up to double-nine, was trying to arrange them all in sequence in the usual way—six against six, three against three, blank against blank, etc. His father said to him, "You are attempting an impossibility, but if you will let me pick out four dominoes it can then be done, and those that I take shall contain the smallest total number of pips possible in the circumstances." Now, which dominoes might the father have selected? Remember that the dominoes in common use in this country stop at double-six, but we are here using a set up to double-nine. I have already shown in these pages that if the smaller set be arranged anyhow in a line according to rule, the two end numbers will always be the same. But in the case of this larger set, it is, as the father said, impossible to get them all in sequence.

## Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

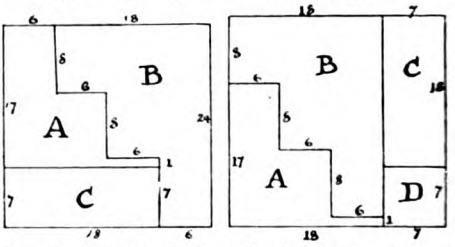
### 786.—THE TREADMILL.

Black always plays "K moves" except where his move is given in brackets. 1 Q—K 5 ch., 2 Q—K 4 ch., 3 Q—KB 4 ch., 4 Q—B 3 ch., 5 Q—Kt 3 ch., 6 Q—Kt 2 ch., 7 Q—R 2 ch. (7 P—K 4), 8 Q takes P ch. (repeat moves 2 to 7 inclusive) (14 P—K 4), 15 Q takes P ch (repeat moves 2 to 7) (21 B—Q 3), 22 Q takes B ch. 23 Q—Q 5 ch. (repeat moves 1 to 7), 31 R—QR 2 ch. (31 Kt—R 4), 32 Q—KKt 2 ch., 33 Q—Kt 3 ch., 34 Q—B 3 ch., 35 Q—B 4 ch., 36 Q—K 4 ch., 37 Q—K 5 ch., 38 Q takes Kt ch. (38 Q—R 3 ch.), 39 Q takes Q ch., 40 Q mates.

### 787.—LIFE'S REQUIREMENTS.

The missing words in their order are: REINS, RESIN, RINSE, SIREN, RISEN, ERIN'S.

### 788.—THE SQUARES OF VENEER.




The illustration will show clearly how the 24 square can be cut into three pieces that, with the 7 square, will form a square 25 × 25.

### 789.—CORRECTING A TABLE.

(I.) 533 is not a prime number, its factors being 13 × 41.

(II.) The two omitted primes are 523 (for which 533 above was clearly a misprint) and 809. Take the first series and the omitted odd numbers are 505, 507, 511, 513, 515, 517, 519, 523, 525 527, 529, 531. We can at once strike out 505, 515, 525, as divisible by 5, also 507, 513, 519, and 531 as divisible by 3, because the digits sum to 12, 9, 15, and 9—all divisible by 3. Also 517 is divisible by 11 because the middle digit subtracted from the sum of the other two digits equals 11. Also, on trial, we find 511 divisible by 7 We have thus only to examine 523, 527, and 529. On inspection we ought to recognize 529 as the square of 23, and when we find, on trial, that 527 is 17 times 31, only the prime 523 remains. The 809 can be found by a similar process. Remember that one of the factors (if the number has one) must be less than the square root, or the square root itself.

# THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

## Contents for April, 1926.

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Frontispiece: A Reverie.

PAGE

"DAYS OF MY LIFE."—I. ... ... ... ... ... ... H. RIDER HAGGARD ... 315
Illustrations by Tom Peddie and Frank Wiles, and from Photographs.

CLARIBEL ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ARNOLD BENNETT ... 327
Illustrations by F. Matania, R.I.

MINISTERING ANGEL ... ... ... ... ... ... ROLAND PERTWEE ... 336
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

JAMES JAMES ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... BARRY PAIN ... ... 345
Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik.

REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS ... ... ... PRINCE NICHOLAS OF GREECE 350
Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd, and from a Photograph.

THE THOUSAND-POUND EMERALD ... ... ... ... L. J. BEESTON ... ... 356
Illustrations by S. H. Vedder.

THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX OF OLD SIPPY ... ... P. G. WODEHOUSE ... 366
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

DO "COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE"—
IN DREAMS OR PREMONITIONS? ... ... ... ... SIR OLIVER LODGE ... 377
Illustrations by Tom Peddie.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE RUSSIAN ... ... ... ... H. DE VERE STACPOOLE 384
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

THE LEGACY ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... MADELINE GARDNER ... 392
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

ACROSTICS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 397

THE PUZZLE KING ... ... ... ... An Interview with HENRY E. DUDENEY ... 398
Illustrations from Diagrams and a Photograph.

"FIRE!" ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... C. C. ANDREWS ... ... 405
Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.

PERPLEXITIES ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... HENRY E. DUDENEY ... 416

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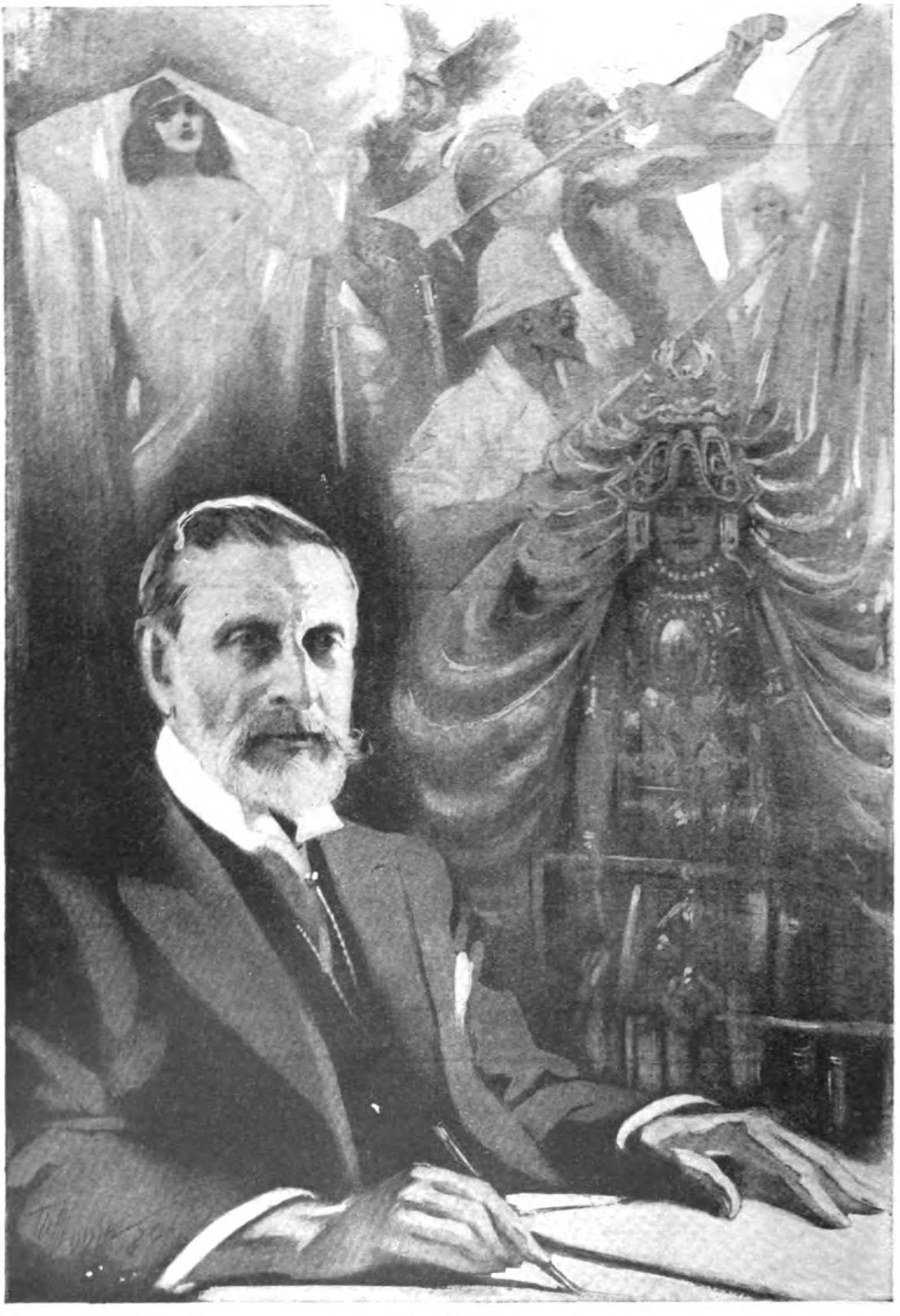

A REVERIE.

# "Days of My Life"

By

# H. RIDER HAGGARD

## I.—CHILDHOOD.

Identifying my birthplace—"More or less of a dunderhead at lessons"—Visits to France and Germany—A tip that was not appreciated.

I AM the eighth child of the family of ten, seven sons and three daughters, who were born to my father and mother. As it chances I first saw the light (on the 22nd of June, 1856), not at Bradenham Hall, which at the time was let, but at the Wood Farm on that property, whither, on her return from travelling in France, my mother retired to be confined. A few years ago I visited the room in which this interesting event took place. It is a typical farmhouse upper chamber, very pleasant in its way, and to the fact of my appearance there I have always been inclined, rather fancifully perhaps, to attribute the strong agricultural tastes which I believe I alone of my family possess.

Here I will tell a little story which shows how untrustworthy contemporary evidence may be. On the occasion of this visit I was accompanied by a friend, Sir Frederick Wilson, and his niece, who were anxious to see my birthplace. Now near to the Wood Farm at Bradenham stands another farm, which for some unknown reason I had got into my head to be the real spot, and as such I showed it to my friends. When I had finished, a farmer, the late James Adcock, who was standing by and who remembered the event, ejaculated :—

"What be you a-talking of, Mr. Rider? You weren't born there at all; you were born yinder."

"Of course," I said, "I remember," and

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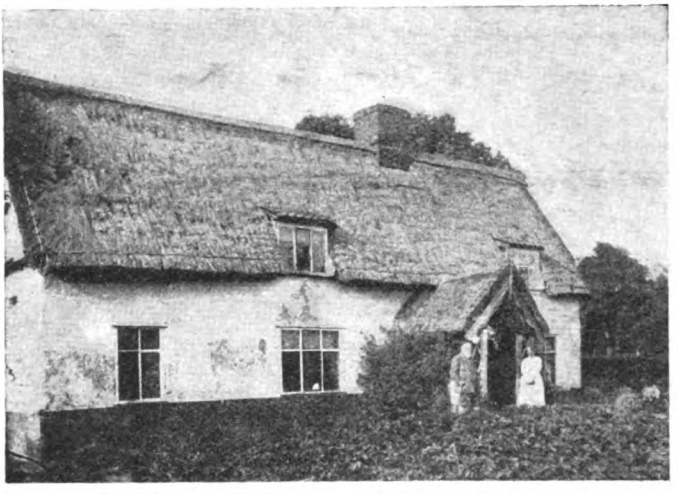


H. Rider Haggard's birthplace.

led the way to the Wood Farm with every confidence, where I showed the window of the birth-chamber.

As I was doing so an old lady thrust her head out of the said window and called out:

"What ever be you a-talking of, Mr. Rider? You weren't born in this 'ere room, you were born in that room yinder."

Then, amidst general laughter, I retired discomfited. Such, I repeat, is often the value of even contemporary evidence, although it is true that in this case James Adcock and the old lady were the real contemporary evidence, since a man can scarcely be expected to remember the room in which he was born.

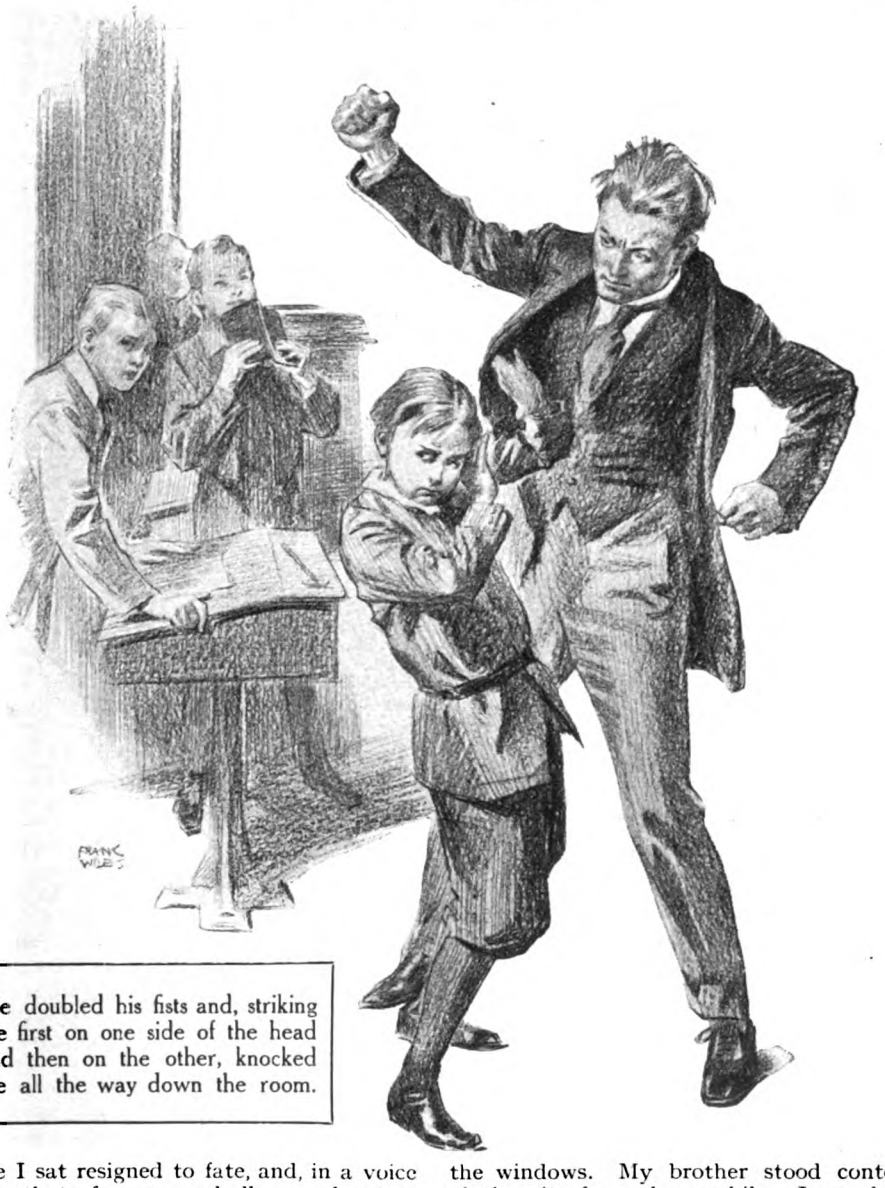
My mother has told me that I was an extremely delicate infant; indeed, I appeared in the world with the jaundice, and, like my younger brother, was christened in a certain china bowl which I still possess. A little while later, I do not know how long, I was attacked with inflammation of the lungs. The old doctor of the neighbourhood—his name was Clouting and he lived at Shipdham—gave me up and departed, saying that he could do no more. Perhaps he reflected that there were already plenty of the Haggard family and that if a weak infant departed it did not greatly matter. However, my mother, a woman of infinite resource, although she was very ill herself, rose to the occasion. When the doctor had gone, as she told me, she caused flannels to be heated in boiling water and laid them one after another upon my chest, and by this means drew out the inflammation, so that, to the great astonishment of the doctor, in the end I lived.

H. Rider Haggard —age 4.

It seems that I was a whimsical child. At least, Hocking, my mother's maid, a handsome, vigorous, black-eyed, raw-boned Cornish-woman, who spent most of her active life in the service of the family, informed me in after years that nothing would induce me to go to sleep unless a clean napkin folded in a certain way was placed under my head, which napkin I called "an ear." Even now I have dim recollections of crying bitterly until this "ear" was brought to me. Also I was stupid. Indeed, although she always indignantly denied the story in after years, I remember, when I was about seven, my dear mother declaring that I was as heavy as lead in body and mind.

I fear that I was more or less of a dunderhead at lessons. Even my letters presented difficulties to me, and I well recollect a few years later being put through an examination by my future brother-in-law, the Rev. Charles Maddison Green, with the object of ascertaining what amount of knowledge I had acquired at a day-school in London.

The results of this examination were so appalling that when he was apprised of them my indignant father burst into the room



He doubled his fists and, striking me first on one side of the head and then on the other, knocked me all the way down the room.

where I sat resigned to fate, and, in a voice like to that of an angry bull, roared out at me that I was "only fit to be a greengrocer." Even then I wondered mildly why this affront should be put upon a useful trade. After the row was over I went for a walk with my brother Andrew, who was two years older than myself, and who, it appeared, had assisted at my discomfiture from behind a door. Just where Leinster Square opens into a main street—I think it is Westbourne Grove; at any rate, in those days Whiteley had a single little shop not far off at which my mother used to deal—there is or was a fruit and vegetable store with no glass in the windows. My brother stood contemplating it for a long while. I wondered why. At last he said:—

"I say, old fellow, when you become a greengrocer, I hope you'll let me have oranges cheap!"

To this day I have never quite forgiven that most heartless remark.

After all, it was not perhaps strange that I did not learn much at these London day-schools—for I went to two of them. The first I left suddenly. It was managed by a head master and an usher whose names I have long forgotten. The usher was a lanky, red-haired, pale-faced man whom we all

hated because of his violent temper and injustice. On one occasion when his back was turned to the class to which I belonged, that I presume was the lowest, I amused myself and my companions by shaking my little fists at him, whereon they laughed. The usher wheeled round and asked why we were laughing, whereon some mean boy piped out :—

"Please, sir, because Haggard is shaking his fists at you."

He called me to him, and I perceived that he was trembling with rage.

"You young brute!" he said, "I'll see you in your grave before you shake your fists at me again."

Then he doubled his own and, striking me first on one side of the head and then on the other, knocked me all the way down the long room, and finally over a chair into a heap of slates in a corner, where I lay awhile almost senseless. I recovered and went home. Here my eldest sister, Ella, noticing my bruised and dazed condition, cross-examined me till I told her the truth. An interview followed between my father and the master of the school which resulted in the dismissal of the usher and my departure. Afterwards I met that usher in the Park somewhere near the Row, and so great was my fear of him that I never stopped running till I reached the Marble Arch.

After this my father sent me to a second day-school, where the pupils were supposed to receive a sound business education.

Then came the examination that I have mentioned at the hands of my brother-in-law. As a result I was dispatched to the Rev. Mr. Graham, who took in two or three small boys (at that time I must have been nine or ten years of age) at Garsington Rectory, near Oxford.

I SUPPOSE it was before I went to Mr. Graham's, though on this point I am not clear, that we all migrated abroad for a certain period. Probably this was in order that we might economize, though what economy my father can have found in dragging a tumultuous family about the Continent I cannot conceive. Or perhaps I used to join them during the holidays.

One of the places in which we settled temporarily was Dunkirk, where we used to have lively times. Several of my elder brothers, particularly Jack and Andrew, together with some other English boys, formed themselves into a band and fought the French boys of a neighbouring *lycée*. These youths outnumbered us by far, but what we lacked in numbers we made up for by the ferocity of our attack. One of our stratagems was to stretch a rope across the street over which the little Frenchmen, as they gambolled joyously out of school, tripped and tumbled. Then from some neighbouring court, where we lay in wait, we raised our British war-cry and fell upon them. How those battles raged! To this day I can hear the yells of "*Cochons d'Anglais!*" and the answering shouts of "*Yah, Froggie, allez à votre maman!*" as we hit and kicked and wallowed in the mire.

At last I think the police interfered on the complaints of parents, and we were deprived of this particular joy.

I suppose that it must have been earlier than this, for as to all these early foreign experiences my memory is hazy, that we stayed for a while at Coblentz. I remember being taken a trip up the Rhine, that I might study its scenery, and retiring to the cabin to read a story book. Missing me, my father descended and dragged me out by the scruff of the neck, exclaiming loudly, to the vast amusement of the other passengers :—

"I have paid five thalers for you to improve your mind by absorbing the beauties of Nature, and absorb them you shall."

Of Coblentz I recall little except the different colours of the waters of the Meuse and the Rhine. What remains fixed in my memory, however, is the scene of our departure thence by boat. In those days my father wore some false teeth, and when the steamer was about to start it was discovered that these teeth were still reposing in a glass upon his dressing-table a mile or more away.

A tumult followed, and in the end Hocking, my mother's maid, whom I have already mentioned, was dispatched to fetch them, in spite of the remonstrances of the captain. Off she went like a racehorse, and then ensued a most tumultuous time. The captain shouted and rang his bell, the steam whistle blew, and my father shouted also, much more loudly than the captain, whilst I and the remainder of the family giggled in the background. A crisis supervened. The captain would wait no longer and ordered the sailors to cast off. My father in much louder tones ordered them to do nothing of the sort. The steam whistle sent up one continual scream. At last the ropes were loosed, when suddenly bounding down the street that led to the quay, her dress well above her knees and waving the false teeth in her hand, appeared Hocking. Then the captain and my father congratulated each other, he arranged the false teeth in their proper home, the boat started, and peace reigned for a little while.

I think that it was at Cologne that we had a supper party, a considerable affair, for wherever we went there seemed to be a large number of people whom we knew. Among them was an aunt of mine, Mrs.

**"Rider, what are you doing here? Explain, sir. Explain!"**
**"Please, father," I answered, "I knew that when you all came in there would be no room for me, so I had my supper first."**

Fowle, who is still living to-day at a great age, although her husband, the Rev. Mr. Fowle, who was then with her, has long been dead. To her I am indebted for the following story, of which personally I have no recollection. It appears that when the preliminary party, or whatever it may have been, was over, and at the appointed time the company trooped in to supper, they were astonished to find a single small boy, to wit myself, seated at the end of the table and just finishing an excellent meal.

"Rider," said my father in tones of thunder, "what are you doing here? Explain, sir. Explain!"

"Please, father," I answered in a mild voice, "I knew that when you all came in there would be no room for me, so I had my supper first."

My Uncle Fowle was a very humorous man, and the following is an instance of his readiness. While in France an excited Frenchman rushed up to him at a railway station ejaculating, "Mouton. Monsieur Mouton, n'est-ce-pas?"

"Non," replied my uncle quietly. "*Poulet moi, Poulet!*"

When at last he was dying on a certain Christmas Eve, the servants were sent for and filed past his bed, bidding him farewell. When it came to the cook's turn, that worthy person, losing her head in the solemnity of the moment, bobbed a curtsy and said in a cheerful voice:—

"A merry Christmas to you, sir. I wish you a merry Christmas."

It is reported that a twinkle of the old humour came into my uncle's eye and a faint smile flickered on his face. The tale is of a sort that he would have delighted to tell.

One more story.

Somewhere about the year 1868 my brother Andrew and I were staying at Brimshop Rectory with my Uncle and Aunt Fowle. He was a generous man, and when we boys departed after such visits used to present us with what he called an honorarium, or in other words a tip. On this occasion, however, no honorarium was forthcoming, but in place of it he presented us with a sealed envelope which we were strictly charged not to open until we reached a certain station on the line. To this day I can see the pair of us fingering the envelope in the railway carriage in the happy certainty that Uncle Fowle had surpassed himself by presenting us with what the thin feel of the paper within assured us was a five-pound note. The station was reached at last and we tore open the envelope. From it emerged a sheet of blue paper on which were inscribed two texts, those beginning with "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way," and "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." We stared at each other blankly, for the state of our finances was such that we had counted on that tip and did not quite appreciate this kind of holy joke. Oddly enough, this piece of blue paper has chanced to survive all the wanderings of my life; as I write I hold it in my hand. Would that I had acted more closely upon the advice it conveys!

## II.—YOUTH.

Stories of the Haggard voice—My father and mother—Family life at Bradenham—Early years at school—My first fight—A public apology by a schoolmaster—Leaving school to "cram" for the Foreign Office examination—A youthful love affair and its strange sequel—A South African appointment.

BRADENHAM HALL, which lies between Dereham and Swaffham, in West Norfolk, and is now (in 1912) the property of my brother, Sir William Haggard, K.C.M.G., C.B., H.B.M.'s Minister to Brazil, is a beautifully-situated and comfortable red-brick house surrounded by woods. It was built about one hundred and fifty years ago, and my family have resided there for four generations. The only noteworthy piece of history connected with the house is that it was hired by Mr. Bolton, the husband of Nelson's sister, who on more than one occasion asked Lady Hamilton there to stay with them. When I was a young fellow I knew an old man in the village called Canham who at that time was page-boy at the Hall. He remembered Lady Hamilton well, and, when I asked him to describe her, said, "She waur a rare fine opstanding" (here followed an outspoken and opprobrious term), "she waur."

Notwithstanding his somewhat frequent excursions abroad, and certain years that we spent at Leamington and in London when economy was the order of the day, my father spent most of his life at Bradenham, to which he was devotedly attached. But of my grandfather I know little, for he died at Brighton in 1843, and my father seldom spoke of him. My father was a barrister, like myself, but I do not think that he practised to any great extent, probably because he had no need to do so.

However, my father turned his legal lore to some practical use, for he became a chairman of Quarter Sessions for Norfolk, an office which he held till his death over forty years later. He used to conduct the proceedings with great dignity, to which his appearance, for he was a very handsome man, better looking, indeed, than any of his sons, and his splendid voice added not a little.

Most of us have inherited the voice, though not to the same degree. Indeed, it has been a family characteristic for generations, and my father told me that once as a young man he was recognized as a Haggard by an old lady who had never seen him and did not know his name, merely by the likeness of his voice to that of his great-grandfather, who had been her friend in youth. Never was there such a voice as my father's; moreover, he was wont to make use of it. It was a joke concerning him which I may have originated that, if he was in the city of Norwich, and anyone wished to discover his whereabouts, all they needed to do was to stand in the market-place for a while and listen. Here is a good tale of that voice.

My youngest brother, Arthur, now Major Haggard, had been lunching with him at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in Pall Mall, and after luncheon bade him farewell on the steps of the club and went his ways. Presently he heard a roar of "Arthur! Arthur!" and, not wishing to attract attention to himself, quickened his steps. It was the very worst thing that he could do, for the roars redoubled. Arthur began to run, people began to stare. Somebody cried "Stop thief!" Arthur, now followed by a crowd in which a policeman had joined, ran harder till he was brought to a stop by the sentry at Marlborough House. Then he surrendered and was escorted by the crowd back to the Oxford and Cambridge Club. As he approached, my father, taking in the state of the case, bellowed out:—

"Don't forget to give my love to your mother."

Then, amidst roars of laughter, Arthur departed to catch the train to Bradenham, *en route* for Egypt.

MY father was a typical squire of the old sort, a kind of Sir Roger de Coverley. He reigned at Bradenham like a king, blowing everybody up and making rows innumerable. Yet I do not think there was a more popular man in the county of Norfolk. Even the servants, whom he rated in a fashion that no servants would put up with nowadays, were fond of him. He could send back the soup with a request to the cook to drink it all herself, or some other infuriated message. He could pull at the bells until feet of connecting wire hung limply down the wall, and announce, when whoever it was he wanted appeared, that Thorpe Idiot Asylum was her proper home, and so forth. Nobody seemed to mind in the least. It was only the Squire's way, they said.

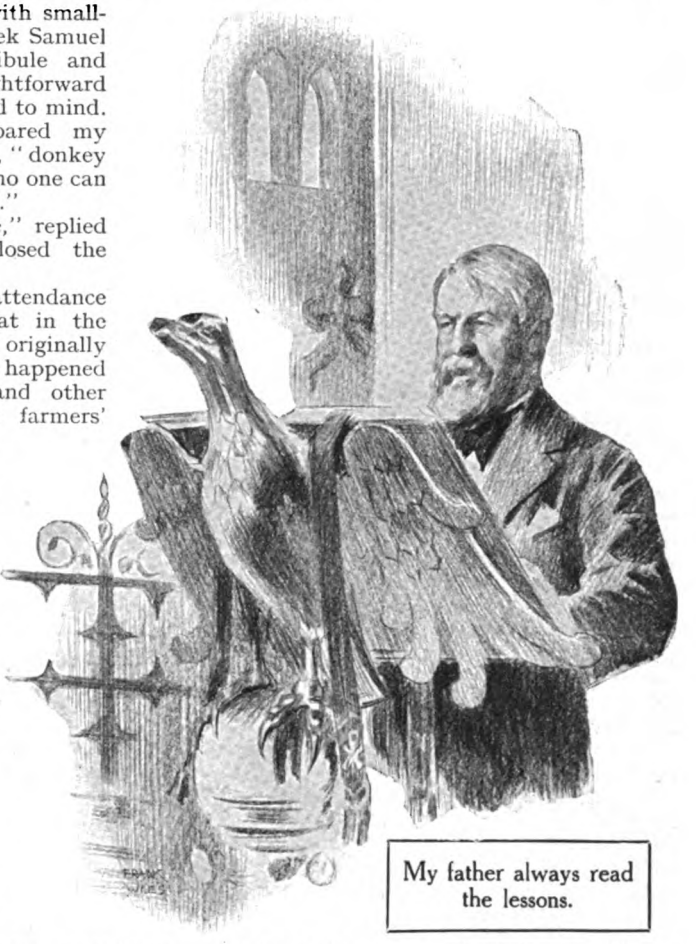
It was the same with the outdoor men, especially with one Samuel Adcock, his factotum, a stout, humorous person whose

face was marked all over with small-pox pits. About once a week Samuel was had in to the vestibule and abused in a most straightforward fashion, but he never seemed to mind.

"I believe, Samuel," roared my father at him in my hearing, "donkey as you are, you think that no one can do anything except yourself."

"Nor they can't, Squire," replied Samuel, calmly, which closed the conversation.

My father was regular in attendance at church. We always sat in the chancel on oak benches, originally designed for the choir. If he happened to be in time himself, and other parishioners, such as the farmers' daughters, happened to be late, his habit was, when he saw them enter, to step into the middle of the nave, produce a very large old watch which I now possess, for on his death bed he told Hocking to give it to me, and hold it aloft, that the sinners as they walked up the church might become aware of the enormity of their offence.



My father always read the lessons.

He always read the lessons, and read them very well. There were certain chapters, however, those which are full of names, both in the Old and New Testaments, which were apt to disagree with his taste. It was not that he was unable to pronounce these names, for, having been a fair classic in his youth, he did this better than most. Yet when he had finished the list it would occur to him that they might have been rendered more satisfactorily. So he would go back to the beginning and read them all through again.

At the conclusion of the service no one in the church ventured to stir until he had walked down it slowly and taken up his position on a certain spot in the porch. Here he stood and watched the congregation emerge, counting them like sheep.

Notwithstanding his hot temper, foibles, and tricks of manner, there was something about him that made him extraordinarily popular, not only as I have said in his household, but in the outside world. Thus I remember that once the Liberals (needless to say he was the strongest of Conservatives) offered not to contest the division if he would consent to represent it. This, with all the burden of his large family on his back, he could not, however, afford to do. It is a pity, for I am sure that his strong personality, backed as it was by remarkable shrewdness, would have made him a great figure in the House of Commons, and one who would have been long remembered.

Considered as a whole, it would have been difficult to find a more jovial party than we were at Bradenham in the days of my youth, especially when my father was in a good mood. The noise, of course, was tremendous, because everybody had plenty to say and was fully determined that it should not be hidden from the world. In the midst of all this hubbub sat my dearest mother, like an angel that had lost her way and found herself in pandemonium. Not being blest with the Haggard voice, though she had a very sweet one of her own, often and often she was reduced to the necessity of signifying her wishes by signs. Indeed, it became a habit of hers, if she needed the salt or anything else, to point to it and beckon it towards her.

Here I will try to give some description of this mother with whom we were blest. Twenty-two years have passed since she left us, but I can say honestly that every one of those years has brought to me a deeper appreciation of her beautiful character. Indeed, she seems to be much nearer to me now that she is dead than she was while she still lived. It is as though our intimacy and mutual understanding has grown in a way as real as it is mysterious.

I believe I am right in saying that she met my father at Harrogate, where her father, Mr. Doveton, was taking the waters. They were married in 1844, when she was twenty-five years of age, and children came to them in what ladies nowadays would consider superabundance. The eldest, my sister Ella, was born in Rome in March, 1845, while they were still upon a marriage tour, and subsequently in quick succession came the others. The last of us, my brother Arthur, appeared in November, 1860—well do I remember my father in a flowered dressing-gown telling us to be quiet because we had a little brother. This allows about sixteen years between the eldest and the youngest, including one who came into the world stillborn. Although she had ten living, my mother never ceased to regret this boy, and I remember her crying when she pointed out to me where he was buried in Bradenham churchyard.

She never was a beauty in the ordinary sense of the word, but in youth, to judge by the pictures which I have seen of her (photographs were not then known), she must have been very refined and charming in appearance, and indeed remained so all her life. Her abilities were great; taking her all in all she was perhaps the ablest woman whom I have known, though she had no iron background to her character; for that she was too gentle. Her bent, no doubt, was literary, and had circumstances permitted it I am sure she would have made a name in that branch of art to which, in the intervals of her crowded life, she gravitated by nature. Also she was a good musician and drew well. Of her mental abilities I have, however, spoken in a brief memoir which I wrote of her in the year 1890.

I think that the greatest of her gifts, however, was that of conversation. No more charming companion could be imagined. Also she had the art of drawing the best out of anyone with whom she might be talking, as the sympathetic sometimes can do. In a minute or two she would find which was his or her strongest point, and to this turn the conversation. Also, notwithstanding the tumultuous nature of her life, her illnesses and other distractions, she contrived to read a great deal and to keep herself *au courant* with all thought movements and the political affairs of the day. Further, she did her very best to teach her numerous children the truths of religion and to lead them into the ways of righteousness and peace. I fear, however, that at times we got beyond her. It is not easy for any woman to follow and direct all the physical and mental activities of a huge and vigorous family who were continually coming and going, first from schools and elsewhere and later from every quarter of the world. She never complained, but I cannot think that the life she was called upon to lead was very congenial to her.

Such was the circle in which I grew up. I think that on the whole I was rather a quiet youth, at any rate by comparison. Certainly I was very imaginative, although I kept my thoughts to myself, which I dare say had a good deal to do with my reputation for stupidity. I believe I was considered the dull boy of the family. Without doubt I was slow at my lessons, chiefly because I was always thinking of something else. Also to this day there are subjects at which I am extremely stupid. Thus, although I rarely forget the substance of anything worth remembering, never could or can I learn anything by heart. Moreover, all mathematics are absolutely abhorrent to me, while as for Euclid it bored me so intensely that I do not think I ever mastered the meaning of the stuff.

I think it is fortunate for me that I have never been called upon to face the competitive examinations which are now so fashionable, and I will add, in my opinion, in many ways so mischievous, for I greatly doubt whether I should have succeeded in them. The only one for which I ever entered was that for the Army, which, about 1872, was more severe than is now the case. Then I went up almost without preparation, not because I wished to become a soldier, but in order to keep a friend company, and was duly floored by my old enemy, Euclid, for which I am very thankful. Had I passed I might have gone on with the thing and by now been a retired Colonel with nothing to do, like so many whom I know.

OF those early years at Bradenham few events stand out clearly in my mind. Like the majority of country-bred boys, I adored a gun. That given to me was a single-barrelled muzzle-loader. With this weapon I went within an ace of putting an end to my mortal career, contriving in some mysterious way to let it off so that the charge just grazed my face. Also I almost shot my brother Andrew through a fence which it was our habit to hunt for rabbits,

one of us on either side, with Jack, a dear terrier dog that ultimately was poisoned by licking itself after being washed with carbolic, working the ditch in the middle.

I did terrible deeds with that gun. Once even, unable to find any other game, I shot a missel-thrush on its nest, a crime that has haunted me ever since. Also I poached a cock-pheasant, shooting it on the wing through a thick oak tree so that it fell kicking into a pond, whence it was retrieved with difficulty. Also I killed a farmer's best laying duck. It was in the moat of the Castle Plantation, where I concluded no respectable tame duck would be, and there it died, with results almost as painful to me as to the duck, which was demonstrated to have about a dozen eggs inside it. The common idea of amusing the English boy is to give him a gun and send him out to kill. As I chance now in my age to have developed strong views as to all this slaughter of the helpless lower animals, I think that it would be well to inculcate more mercy in the young. Sport doubtless is good in its way, but unnecessary cruelty should be avoided. Boys kill wantonly because they do not understand. If it were pointed out to them that to massacre harmless creatures merely for the fun of it is an evil act, they would be more careful and not shoot birds upon their nests or wandering cats. Still, I admit that it is hard to draw the line. A pheasant probably objects as much to being killed as does the sitting thrush.

**A boy came up and hit me in the face, saying: "Phillips sends this to the new fellow in a parson's hat."**

After my time at Mr. Graham's, of whom I have spoken, came to an end, how or when I do not know, the question arose as to where I should be sent to school. All my five elder brothers, except Jack, the sailor, had the advantage of a public school education. William and Bazett went to Winchester and afterwards to Oxford and Cambridge respectively; Alfred to Haileybury, Andrew to Westminster, and subsequently my younger brother, Arthur, to Shrewsbury and Cambridge. When it came to my turn, however, funds were running short, which is scarcely to be wondered at, as my father has told me that about this time the family bills for education came to twelve hundred pounds a year. Also, as I was supposed to be not very bright, I dare say that it was thought that to send me to a public school would be to waste money. So it was decreed that I should go to the Grammar School at Ipswich, which had the advantages of being cheap and near at hand.

Never shall I forget my arrival at that educational establishment, to which my father conducted me. We travelled *via*

Norwich, where he bought me a hat. For some reason best known to himself, the headgear which he selected was such as was generally worn by a curate, being of the ordinary clerical black felt and shape. In this weird head-dress I was duly delivered at Ipswich Grammar School. As soon as my father had tumultuously departed to catch his train I was sent into the playground, where I stood, a forlorn and lanky figure. Presently a boy came up and hit me in the face, saying:—

"Phillips (I think that was his name) sends this to the new fellow in a parson's hat."

This was too much for me, for underneath my placid exterior I had a certain amount of spirit.

"Show me Phillips," I said, and a very big boy was pointed out to me.

I went up to him, made some appropriate repartee to his sarcasm about my hat, and hit him in the face. Then followed a fight of which, as he was so much larger and stronger, of course I got the worst. However, I gained the respect of my schoolfellows, and thenceforth my clergyman's hat was tolerated until I managed to procure another.

William Meybohm Haggard, father of H. Rider Haggard.

I spent two or three years at Ipswich. At that time it was a rough place, and there was much bullying of which the masters were not aware. The best thing about the school was its head master, Dr. Holden, with whom I became very friendly in after life when, as it chanced, we lived almost next door to each other in Redcliffe Square.

He was a charming and a kindly gentleman, also one of the best scholars of his age. But I do not think that the management of a school like Ipswich was quite the task to which he was suited, and I am sure that much went on there whereof he knew nothing.

The second master was a certain Dr. or Mr. Saunderson, an enormous man physically, who was also a most excellent scholar. He was a gentleman too, as the following story shows.

Once by some accident I wrote a really fine set of Latin verses, something quite out of the way. He had me up and asked me where I had cribbed them. I told him that I had not cribbed them at all. He answered that I was a liar, for he was sure that there was no one in the school that could write such verses. Until a few years ago my recollection was that I proved to him that this was not the case, and that there the matter ended. It appears, however, as I learned a few years ago, on the occasion of my returning to Ipswich School in order to take a leading part in the Speech Day function, that the real finale was more dramatic. A gentleman who had been my class-mate in those far-off days informed me that, when Mr. Saunderson discovered that he had accused me falsely, he summoned the whole school and offered me a public apology. From inquiries that I made there seems to be no doubt that this really happened.

I did not distinguish myself in any way at Ipswich, I imagine for the old reason that I was generally engaged in thinking of other things than the lesson in hand. Moreover, in those times boys did not receive the individual attention that is given to them now. The result was that the best of such abilities as I may possess was never discovered. On one occasion, however, I did triumph.

Mr. Saunderson offered a special prize to the boy who could write the best descriptive essay on any subject that he might select. I chose that of an operation in a hospital. I had never been in a hospital or seen an operation, so any information I had upon the matter must have come from reading.

Still, I beat all the other essayists hollow and won the prize. This, as it chanced, I never received, for when I returned to school after the holidays Mr. Saunderson had forgotten all about the matter and I did not like to remind him of it.

I took my part in the school games and was elected captain of the second football team, but did not stay long enough at Ipswich to get into the first. Not much more returns to me about this period of my life that is worthy of record. Although I believe that I was popular among my schoolmates, who showed their affection by naming me "Nosey," in allusion to the prominence of that organ on my undeveloped face, I did not care for school and found it monotonous, with the result that my memories concerning it are somewhat of a blur.

With characteristic suddenness my father made up his mind that I was to leave, so Ipswich knew me no more. It was at this period that my father determined that I should go up for the Foreign Office, and with a view to preparing for the examination I was sent to a private tutor in London, a French professor who had married one of my sister's schoolmistresses. He was a charming man and she was a charming woman, but having married late in life they did not in the least assimilate. I think that I stopped with these good people for about a year, imbibing some knowledge of French literature. Then my father announced that I was to go to Scoones, the great crammer, and there make ready to face the Foreign Office examination.

H. Rider Haggard's mother.

To this end, when I was just eighteen, I was put in lodgings alone in London, entirely uncontrolled in any way. The first set of these lodgings was somewhere near Westbourne Grove and kept by a young widow. As they did not turn out respectable I was moved to others in Davies Street, an excellent situation for a young gentleman about town. Be it remembered that this happened at a time of life when youths nowadays are either still at school or just gone up to college, where they have the advantage of effective guidance and control for some years. At this age I was thrown upon the world, as I remember when I was a little lad my elder brothers threw me into the Rhine to teach me to swim. After nearly drowning I learned to swim, and in a sense the same may be said of my London life.

There is a kind Providence that helps some people through many dangers, although unfortunately it seems to abandon others to their fate. In my case it helped me through.

During this time that I was at Scoones's a great event happened. I fell truly and earnestly in love. If all goes well, this, I suppose, is one of the best things that can occur to a young fellow. It steadies him and gives him an object in life · someone for whom to work. If all goes ill, it is one of the worst, for then the reverse is apt to come about. It unsteadies him, makes him reckless, and perhaps throws him in the way of undesirable adventures. In my case, in the end all went wrong, or seemed to do so at the time.

I was taken by a friend to a ball at Richmond; who gave it I have long forgotten. There I saw a very beautiful young lady, a few years older than myself, to whom I was instantly and overwhelmingly attracted. I say beautiful advisedly, for to my mind she was one of the three really lovely women whom I have seen in my life. The second was the late Duchess of Leinster, and the third was a village girl at

Bradenham who was reported to be the daughter of a gentleman. She, poor thing, died quite young.

At length the ball came to an end and I escorted this lady to her carriage—she was driving back to London alone—with the intelligent object of ascertaining where she lived. In this, by the way, I failed; either I did not catch the address or it was too vague and general. Ultimately, however, I overcame that difficulty by a well-directed inquiry at a butcher's shop in what I knew to be the neighbourhood. It occurred to me that even goddesses must eat. The reason that I mention this matter is because of a curious coincidence connected with it. The house where the ball took place had a garden in front, down which garden ran a carpeted path. At the end of the path a great arch had been erected for the occasion, and through this arch I followed the young lady. Some thirty-five years later I was present at her death-bed, and subsequently, with my wife, who had become her friend many years before, was one of the few mourners at her funeral. At the church where this took place it is the custom to carry out coffins through the big western door. As I followed her the general aspect of the arch of this door reminded me of something, at the moment I could not remember what. Then it came back to me. It was exactly like that other arch through which I had followed her to her carriage on the night when first we met. Also, strangely different as were the surroundings, there were other accessories that were similar in their general effect.

I THINK I was about a year and a half at Scoones's, making many friends, collecting many experiences and some knowledge of the world. How much book knowledge I collected I do not know, nor whether I should have passed for the Foreign Office if I had gone up. But it was not fated that I should do so. In the summer vacation of 1875 I went to join my family, whom, in the course of one of his Continental expeditions, my father had settled for a while at Tours. I travelled *viâ* Paris, which I found looking almost itself again. On the last occasion that I had visited it the Column Vendôme was lying shattered on the ground, the great public statues were splashed over with the lead of bullets, and great burnt-out buildings stared at me emptily. I remember a young Frenchman whom I knew took me to a spot backed by a high wall where shortly before he had seen, I think he said, three hundred Communists executed at once. He told me that the soldiers fired into the moving heap until at length it grew still. On the wall were the marks of their bullets.

At Tours I did not live with my family, but with an old French professor and his wife—I think their name was Demeste—in order that I might pursue my studies of the language.

Whilst I was at Tours, making expeditions with the others to see old castles and so forth, my father saw in *The Times*, or heard otherwise, that Sir Henry Bulwer had been appointed to the Lieutenant-Governorship of Natal. Now my father was a man of ideas who never lost a chance of finding an opening for one of his sons, and the Bulwers of Heydon, in Norfolk, were, as it happened, old friends of our family. So he wrote off at once and asked Sir Henry if he would take me with him to Africa on his staff. Sir Henry assented, which was extremely kind of him, as I do not remember that he had ever set eyes on me.

Accordingly in a week or two Scoones's and the Foreign Office had faded into the past, and I reported myself to my future chief in London, where he set me to work at once ordering wine and other stores to be consumed at Government House in Natal.

*In the next instalment Sir Rider Haggard describes his first essays in authorship, and tells how he came to write "King Solomon's Mines," the book that brought him world-wide fame.*

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*Readers will be interested to know that Sir A. Conan Doyle has written some*

**NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES,**

*which will appear in "The Strand Magazine" in due course.*

# CLARIBEL

*By*

# ARNOLD BENNETT

*ILLUSTRATED BY F. MATANIA, R.I.*

I.

CLARIBEL FROSSACK, after attending a rather late tea-party at the flat of her only friend in Paris, an American widow named Sonnenschein, was returning home on foot along the Boulevard du Montparnasse on an evening in October. A tall, well-made, nice-looking blonde girl, tremendously English, with big bones and a good stride to her gait, she officially gave her age as thirty, and her face was a fair confirmation of the statement. The expression on her features was sometimes bright and sometimes overcast, according to her varying attitude towards the phenomena which she encountered; but a sanguine cheerfulness predominated. Her hat and coat were splashed with vivid crimson—the innocent, unconscious signal of the maiden to whomever it might concern.

Rain began to fall, and, in falling, to shape her destiny. She was rather beautifully dressed, with all the skill and sense which she had industriously acquired in six months of Paris. Some years earlier she would have enjoyed and scorned the rain, but she had replaced the physical ideals of her athletic, sporting youth by quite other ideals; she took meticulous care of her clothes, and even of her complexion, with an anxiety which would have earned merely the contempt of her old self. The sky had given everybody in Paris good notice of a change, but Claribel had ignored it, from a certain vagueness of mind; and she had no umbrella. There was no taxi in sight. Trams and motor-buses there were; Claribel, however, had not the courage and decision to try to halt them in their implacable progress, nor did she know where they were going. Moreover, they were all suddenly full.

Putting her trust in the reputation of the Parisian climate, she hoped that the rain would soon cease, unaware that in Paris the rain is capable of raining for three days and three nights without a moment's mercy. And she was optimistic about a taxi, unaware that a sharp shower will miraculously empty every street in Paris of plying taxis. Opposite the Montparnasse station an empty taxi passed her. She timidly hailed it. The driver, with an odious grin, sneered at her simplicity and held his rapid course.

The rain was now pouring down. A serious crisis was at hand in the history of Claribel's attire and complexion. The famous and vast Café de Versailles was in front of her, with its covered *terrasse* full of occupied chairs and tables, and its white-flowing waiters. She hesitated. She certainly could not sit out on the *terrasse;* such a proceeding was in her opinion utterly impossible for an unaccompanied girl. But might she not go inside? She had never been in a *café* alone. There is probably not a more decorous public resort on earth than the old-established Café de Versailles. Yet Claribel feared lest terrible things might happen to her if she entered it. She was a solitary creature, wistful, undecided—she felt as though all Paris was leagued against her friendless, unsupported self. Then, between the rain on one side and the glances of the quizzing people of the *terrasse* on the other, she nerved herself to a frightful, perilous resolve, and strode with beating heart and the most absurd bounce into the crowded interior. Inside she took a long breath.

The first thing she clearly saw was a young man standing up and smiling and bowing to her—with much deference. She blushed

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a little, just as though she had been caught in a questionable act.

"Just my luck!" she thought, scared. Like everybody else, when anything untoward happened to her, she imagined that her luck was as a rule worse than other people's. However, he was a very nice young man, whose ingenuous face and dark, lustrous, wistful eyes she well remembered.

"I came to one of your At Homes," he explained himself. "A friend of mine brought me—François Polin. We'd been shopping together. My name's Arroll."

One of her At Homes! Well, she had had two, and the guests had been almost exclusively her various professors, who taught her French, Italian, music, painting. François Polin was her piano-instructor. She was ashamed of her two miserable fiascos of At Homes.

"Yes," said she. "James Arroll, and he introduced you as 'Jimmie.'"

"It's awfully nice of you to remember me," said Jimmie, obviously pleased that this tall, opulent, powerful, rather imposing lady did remember his timid little self.

The *café* was very full. Claribel looked about vaguely for a free table, and saw none.

"Will you sit here—if you don't mind sharing a table?"

"If you're sure *you* don't mind."

"I should simply love it," said Jimmie, eagerly.

She sat down by him, feeling adventurous, imperilled, and exalted in spirit. She suddenly loved life; her face shone. Then of course she had to account for her entrance into the *café*. Naturally a fib came first into her mind. She had to meet a friend—a girl, oh, a girl! The friend wouldn't arrive, and the explanation of her absence would be the downpour. Somewhat clumsy. The truth was simpler, and she told the truth, brushing drops of rain off her shoulders as it were in corroboration of her story.

"I came," said Jimmie, "because it was too dark even to draw—bad gas, you know. I usually draw a bit when my painting's done. But I get lonely, and then I have to go out. Paris is fearfully lonely."

"Oh, it *is!*" she agreed with strong, sympathetic emotion. She had always assumed that men were never lonely. They were free, with a free code, and they picked up acquaintances easily; they understood and trusted one another; they were all freemasons together. She thought of her desolating loneliness in Paris and liked Jimmie tremendously for being lonely. His admission gave her ease.

A WAITER stood in front of her.

"May I——?" Jimmie began.

She cut him short by ordering tea. Jimmie was having a bock. All around people were drinking coloured and exciting liquids out of various shapes of glasses. She would have loved to drink something dangerous out of a glass, but her upbringing compelled her to keep within a traditional respectability; besides, she would not have known what to order.

She was now sufficiently composed to examine the *café*. She adored its foreignness, its stuffy smell, the click of billiard balls far, far up the great room, the flowing gestures of the waiter as he deposed the shiny tea-things on the marble, the murmur of strange tongues, the perpendicular rain through the glass walls, the constant swishing of the revolving doors, the ring of checks on the cashiers' counter, the occasional sharp cry of some impatient little bearded customer, the newspapers furled on sticks, the dominoes, the chess, the writing of letters on vile blotting-pads. Enchantment!

"Quite a number of Germans here now," observed Jimmie.

"Yes," she said, cautiously hostile.

"I think it's rather a good thing," Jimmie continued. "Of course, it's unpleasant in a way, and you wonder how they have the nerve; but it gets people used to what they've got to get used to sooner or later. They can't go on hating and sulking for ever. Of course I don't know, but that's how it seems to me." He gave a little nervous laugh.

This piece of political wisdom greatly astonished Claribel, for two reasons. First, because it had issued from the almost babyish mouth of one whom she had supposed to be interested solely in the arts—and here he was taking notice of the great world and thinking for himself internationally; he had ideas! And secondly, his ideas were so at variance with those with which she was familiar. Germans had not many years since killed her only brother, and killed her brother-in-law—both professional soldiers. The people whom she knew in England never discussed Germans, save in regard to their brilliant military qualities. Germans had to exist, but they must be ignored as human beings; they were outside the pale. Certainly it was like their unspeakable nerve to force themselves on Paris; but they were Germans, and there was nothing to be said—though much to be suffered in silence. And Jimmie was accepting them with calm, unprejudiced, far-seeing satisfaction. It was a feat on his part.

"Oh, I quite agree," she said, warmly.

Claribel looked about vaguely for a free table, and saw none.
"Will you sit here—if you don't mind sharing a table?" said Jimmie.

The curious thing was that she did agree. And she was aware in herself of an accession of wisdom and broadmindedness.

Further, she admired the baby James. He was assuredly not of her class, which had owned land and hunted and shot and stuck animals and men for centuries; he did not wear a club-necktie, though he wore a necktie which reminded her of the sacred scarf of the Eton Wanderers; he had obviously never been to a public school. But his manners were nevertheless perfect; and he was not dull, as she and hers were; and his mind was free and easy and alert and not afraid of new notions; and his accent was faultless. She admitted that his clothes might have shocked her males; his hair, too, not to mention his dark, lustrous eyes.

"It was so beautiful it made me cry," he was saying, the conversation having shifted from politics to river landscapes.

Not a man of hers but would have killed himself rather than confess to such a weakness! Then there was an interruption. Customers were looking with hope into the street. A few departed; a few more departed. The rain had ceased. Claribel must go. She would have liked to stay; she hated to go. But she must go. She simply could not be free. She had sheltered from the rain; the rain was over; there was no reason for staying. True, neither was there any reason for going, for she had no appointment and naught to do. Still, she must go. She paid—no silly attempt on Jimmie's part to settle for her tea—and she went. Jimmie also paid and went; and he put her into a taxi. No suggestion about meeting again. He said not a word. And she could not.

FATE, however, had Claribel's affairs in hand. Its method of action was violent but effective. Another taxi, turning the corner, as Paris taxis will, on the wrong side of the road out of the Rue de Rennes, caught the bonnet of Claribel's taxi before the latter had moved a dozen yards, and, in addition to putting it out of action, gave Claribel a shaking in body and mind. A small crowd, a policeman, an altercation between two vituperative chauffeurs, a trunk in the roadway, note-taking by the policeman! The rain then sharply resumed its baptismal work and did something to tranquillize the fever of men.

"Excuse me. Hadn't you better come back inside again?"

It was Jimmie, who had apparently witnessed the accident from afar and returned.

"Oh, no. I'm perfectly all right," said Claribel, in a voice rendered loud by excitement.

"You look rather pale. I think——"

"Very well, I will," she agreed. She did feel a little unsteady. The policeman detained her a moment; Jimmie talked to him; and then they re-entered the *café*.

"I'm awfully sorry," said Jimmie.

They sat down.

"I think you'd better have some brandy," said Jimmie.

She yielded to his caprice. She did not need the brandy, but she found pleasure in obeying his suggestion. As soon as he had ordered the cognac she suspected that perhaps she did need it, and after drinking it she had an idea that she might have fainted without it. They discussed the accident, and the naughtiness of French taxi-drivers, at great length.

The *café* was now becoming a restaurant. Waiters covered table after marble table with white linen, and the white linen with cruets and cutlery. Odours multiplied; warmth increased; the place grew even cosier, homelier, more congenial; it proved itself the resort of a race that understood the art of living.

"I think I shall stick here for dinner," said Claribel, with a sudden audacity that rather frightened her.

"I wish *I* could," said Jimmie. "But it's too dear for me. I eat at a pension-restaurant. If I wasn't so frightfully poor I should have ventured to ask you to dine with me." He spoke quite simply, neither ashamed nor defiant, and he gave her the sweetest smile.

"But you can't leave me," said she, with a flash of the imperiousness of the governing class. "You must dine with *me*, of course."

"Well," said he, "I won't be silly about it. It's awfully nice of you to ask me."

His tone was faultless. Claribel thought he was out of sight the most sensible young man she had ever met. She imagined how any young man of her own set in England would have bridled and jibbed and blushed and protested under such an invitation—and ended by accepting it!

They dined—slowly, savouringly, and towards the close of the meal lusciously. Years seemed to have passed since Claribel first entered the adorable Café de Versailles. And it had been raining for years. Existence was transformed for Claribel. The pall of loneliness had been lifted from her. She formed part of humanity; she had a contact. Not ordinarily a facile talker, especially with mere acquaintances, she was now talking with marked ease. Jimmie talked without any effort. He was a natural talker, and he talked naturally. He seemed to say whatever came into his mind, but his mind was an interesting mind and a nice

mind—no necessity to filter or censor its contents before letting them forth!

At intervals, in pauses of argument, Jimmie would point out celebrities or notorieties among the customers. Possibly not notables of the world, but notables of the Montparnasse quarter, which honestly considered itself the centre of the world.

The ornate clock over the cashiers' counter behaved in an extraordinary manner; its fingers raced round the dial. Claribel tried to will them into deliberateness, but they would not be restrained. They showed twenty-five minutes to twelve when the other clock, in Claribel's head, said that the hour could not be later than twenty-five minutes to ten. An evening unlike any other evening that ever was in Paris or in paradise!

Just as Claribel was beginning to make a successful fight against the mysterious magnetic force which held her to her chair and absolutely prevented her from rising to depart—the bill had long ago, through Jimmie's agency, been paid and the change handed over and the tip given—Psichari came up, on his way out of the *café*. Psichari was one of the celebrities already indicated to Claribel by Jimmie. Claribel had felt an artistic thrill at being even in the same *café* with Psichari. You could tell how great a painter Psichari was in Paris by the fact that Jimmie blushed when he most surprisingly stopped at the table, and rose with much deferential ceremony to greet him.

"Present me," murmured the handsome, bearded hero of the studios in an undertone. And he was duly presented to Claribel. Thereupon he sat down at the table, and talked in French.

"You will pardon me, mademoiselle, but I have not been able to prevent myself from regarding you all the evening. You are so exquisitely an English type. It is so romantic to me. No women exist save the English. There are none save the English."

Still, in a more general vein, he talked admirably—better than Jimmie. Claribel, however, was now restless—pleased, but confused and apprehensive. She said that she must leave. And she did leave, escorted to the pavement by the two men. The rain continued with infinite strong perseverance to descend in generous cascades. Claribel got into a taxi, and, while Jimmie was giving the address to the driver, Psichari also got into the taxi. He was not intoxicated—or at least he was not suffering from anything more deleterious than the romantical quality of Claribel's blonde English appearance; but he was uplifted. He stated in an uplifted voice that it would not be safe for Miss Frossack to travel home unaccompanied. Claribel glanced with a certain appeal at Jimmie. Jimmie seized the great painter first by one arm and then by two, and pulled him out of the cab. The two men, Psichari taller than Jimmie and ten years older, faced each other on the pavement.

"Fiche-nous la paix!" Jimmie exhorted the celebrity.

And as Psichari would not listen to the exhortation to leave them in peace, Jimmie hit him on the chest, and the idol of Montparnasse subsided on to the pavement. Jimmie nipped into the taxi, which drove off.

Little was said, but the cave-woman in Claribel could not sleep that night because she had been fought for by two artists on the Parisian pavement; and the English girl in Claribel could not sleep because the delicious Jimmie had asked her to sit for him and she had consented to do so.

The next really thrilling thing that happened to her was the arrival, one evening, of an express letter, which ran: "May I call to-night about nine? I want very much to see you about a matter which is important to me.—Your devoted Jimmie."

Claribel blushed and shook. She blushed and shook all by herself in her own drawing-room.

## II.

ON the morning of the day on which Claribel received the express note from Jimmie in the late afternoon, she had been sitting to him in his studio in the Rue Léopold Robert, a street south of Montparnasse and plenteously inhabited by Anglo-Saxon youths of both sexes of a status similar to that of James Arroll. It was the final sitting for the portrait, and nearly three months had passed since the great scenes inside and outside the Café de Versailles. Claribel had just gone, and Jimmie was still watching her as she primly and brightly descended the four double flights of stairs that separated his lair from the solid earth, when he heard footsteps above him. A figure was coming down from the heights of the fifth storey—a young man dressed in golden brown, very baggy corduroys, heavy boots, a black wide-awake hat with a circumference of about one yard, and a muffler that seemed like a slice off a blanket. The ferocity of the black moustache argued, perhaps falsely, that the hip-pocket held a revolver to match it. Of course, an English painter; French and other painters no longer wore the classic uniform of art.

"Josh!" called Jimmie, shivering in the icy January draughts of the staircase. "Come in and have a look at this blessed thing I've just finished."

" Thy wildest caprice is an order. Let her loose," replied Josh, entering with a swagger the large, naked, and dirty studio of his friend. He examined Claribel's portrait with a lofty and judicial air for an extraordinarily long time. Then, in silence, he went and poked the stove, and then he examined the portrait again.

" Look here, brother," said he, at last. " What in the name of the late esteemed Lord Leighton have you been trying to get at ? "

" Don't you like it ? "

" Rotten ! " said the critic. " Rotten ! It's all over the place. It isn't like anything on earth."

" I feared it," murmured Jimmie, with submission.

" You don't mean to tell me you have the nerve to like it yourself ? "

" Frankly, I don't. But she does."

" Oh, she does, does she ? Well, that settles it. They never like anything but the completely putrid."

" But really she isn't quite the——"

" Silence, sir ! " the bandit stopped him. " If you're thinking of informing me that she's subtly different from all other girls, think better of it and don't. Because I doubt if our friendship would stand it. No girl is different from all other girls. And when she says she likes this portrait, she simply and unaffectedly means that she likes *you*. Have I lived, or was I born this morning ? "

" That's where you're wrong, Josh. She may be a bad critic, but there's no nonsense about her of that sort. She's even cold. You can talk to her just as if she was a man."

" And you do ? "

" I do."

" Laddie, you must introduce me to her. It will be the day of my life. I bid you good morning."

" I say," said Jimmie, timidly, to Josh in the doorway. " You might let me doss in your studio to-morrow night."

" Not on your life ! " said Josh. " I have other arrangements in view. Why ? "

" The landlord was here at eight-fifteen to-day. I owe him two quarters and I can't pay. He's given me till to-morrow."

" The dirty dog ! " exclaimed Josh, with feeling, the basis of his philosophy of existence being the axiom that all persons not painters ought to be willing and proud to be owed money by all painters.

" I haven't had my supplies from London, and I sha'n't have just yet, and it's six months since I sold a thing," Jimmie explained, gloomily.

" Serious, eh ? "

" Yes."

" Then sell a thing at once. Sell her this portrait. From the look of her raiment, wealth is not what she's short of."

" Oh, she's rich all right," said Jimmie, " but I couldn't possibly ask her to buy this."

" Why not ? "

" Because it's not good enough."

" What an ass of a reason ! Unload the bad, my excellent fool. Unload, I say. If *I* do anything decent I always want to keep it. Besides, there are ' passages,' as we critics say, in this that aren't positively criminal. I don't mind stating that the hair is the best bit of pure painting you ever did. But the rest—oh, Mohammed and Buddha ! "

Jimmie shook his head.

" No. I won't do it."

" Then touch her for a thousand francs. Tell her she's helping the sacred cause. She'd love to lend it to you."

Jimmie coloured slightly

" I was wondering whether I might ask her. But she's so jolly decent I don't really care to take advantage——" He gave a nervous laugh.

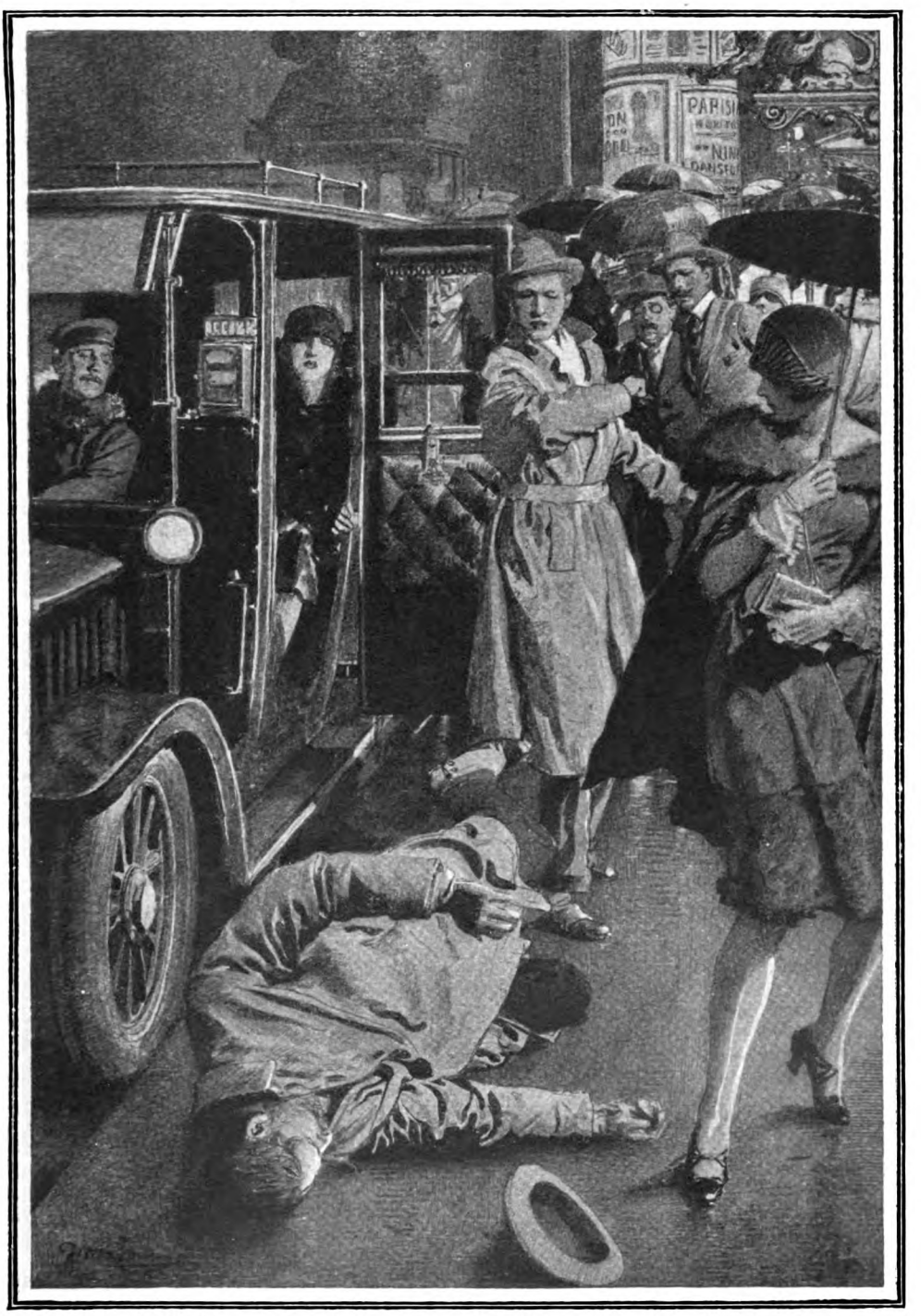
" Well, I beg leave to say no more. She has the stuff. You want it. Which is the same as saying she has your future and you want it. Ask her to lend you a thousand francs, and report to me to-night or to-morrow morning, if you please. And have a care ! " Josh stalkingly departed.

After some hours of mental travail, Jimmie brought himself to the point of telephoning to Claribel about money from a *café*. She was not at home. Then he dispatched the express note, to which he received an answer at seven o'clock : " Delighted to see you. Nine o'clock.—C. F."

## III.

CLARIBEL put the little blue note from Jimmie away, with several other specimens of his handwriting, at the back of a drawer in her dressing-table. Then she pulled it out and read it again and replaced it in the drawer. And all this in the middle of her dressing ! And, further, she was dressing after dinner, not before it. She was dressing all over afresh, in the light of her beautiful bedroom lamps and of the note, which had arrived after her first evening dressing.

She was far gone in love with Jimmie. Jimmie was unlike any other man she had ever known, and especially unlike the men of her own tribe. She admired these men, in a fashion, but how dull and narrow and rigid and incurious they were in their subconscious self-satisfaction and their dependable honesty ! Jimmie had dependable honesty, too, but what a different, what a superior and finer mind ! Of course, he was




Jimmie hit him on the chest, and the idol of Montparnasse subsided on to the pavement.

five years younger than herself, but did that matter? Besides, she had frankly told him her age—after he had guessed twenty-seven; and he did not seem to mind in the least. She knew him now, at the end of twenty-five or thirty sittings; she knew him through and through; and he was sound through and through. And she had decided that he was, or would be, a great painter—no doubt the greatest painter of the age. He had taught her an immense amount about life and art and Paris and the European outlook and such things. Indeed he was a Titan. Yet not on these counts did she adore him. She adored him because he had fought for her on the pavement in front of the Café de Versailles, and because he had such dark, lustrous, wistful eyes, and such an appealing voice and such gentle gestures, and because he was a baby. Strange that he could be at once a Titan and a baby. But so it was. He had no more notion of looking after himself than a baby.

And if he had taught her, she had taught him. She had softened some crudities and she had shown him what a woman thinks, and how and why. And he had learnt eagerly and thankfully.

HER maid (French) now came in.

"Monsieur Arroll."

"A little moment," said Claribel. "Arrange me this tulle, Louise."

She was agitated—and for an excellent reason. She was convinced in her heart that Jimmie had come to ask her to marry him, and she very well knew that she would not refuse him. She had noticed the frequent tendernesses in his voice, the admiration in his eyes, the shy hesitations in his adoring demeanour. At least once, she judged, he had been on the very edge of a proposal in his studio, but timidity had held him back. She could not be mistaken. In half an hour, in an hour, she would be an engaged girl, with vistas of thrilling happiness stretching before her.

Fortunately she was under no obligation to consult anybody. She had no ties; she had full control of her own plenteous money. Imagine having to obtain consent to marry a painter from one of those queer, good, misguided persons who had given her the ridiculous name of Claribel—after some ridiculous poem of Tennyson's! Awful!

She passed shaking into the drawing-room, Louise following her as far as the bedroom door with pats and smoothings of her skirt. She stood hesitant, frightened and blissful in the doorway, showing herself for admiration, at her very best; not offering herself, but expecting to be demanded. She smiled exquisitely, and her lower lip trembled. Nothing of the outdoor athletic girl in her now! She was the indoor, the boudoir girl, richly attired—moulded and prepared for love. She made a splendid vision in the luxurious, luminous drawing-room.

And there stood Jimmie, somewhat threadbare in his neat lounge-suit! Might he not be disconcerted, impeded, by her luxury, by the economic difference between them? Not he! He had a mind above such accidents of fortune. He had genius, outweighing any quantity of money; and moreover, like all artists, he had a taste for luxury—could not resist it.

They sat down. She noticed that he was just as nervous as she was, and this lessened her own nervousness and gave her confidence.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said, brightly, "because I wanted to ask you something."

"Yes?"

"I want you to let me buy that portrait. I should have mentioned it this morning, but I felt a bit awkward about it."

"I'm glad you didn't," said Jimmie. "And I'm sorry you mentioned it now. Because I don't want to part with it."

"Why not?" She asked the question, but she knew the answer. He wished not to part with it because he felt the absolute necessity of having her reminding portrait in his studio. Still she repeated: "Why not?"

"It's not good enough," said Jimmie. "I don't like it well enough to let it go."

"But, Jimmie, I've set my heart on having it. I think it's simply beautiful."

Jimmie shook his head. "No, I must be firm about that." His voice sounded hard to her. He added: "May I tell you right out what I've come for? I want——"

The fatal words were on the very edge of his lips when he stopped and jumped up. Claribel was crying; she was sobbing. His attitude concerning the portrait, acting on her extremely excited nerves, had overset her. She was perhaps quite as startled by the tears as himself. But there they were! And Jimmie was gravely disturbed. He was absurdly disturbed. For it is a remarkable fact that, though a woman's tears mean vastly less than a man's, her—shall we call it?—effervescing point being much lower than a man's, a young man will treat those tears just as seriously as if he had shed them himself.

Jimmie thought it was his duty somehow to stanch them; but he could not devise any method of doing so. And he was aware of remorse. Also he saw the utter impossibility of asking her for a loan. Indeed, the situation was excessively delicate and

demanded for its handling all the experienced, wise, diplomatic ingenuity of a man of the world. And Jimmie knew too well that he was by no means a man of the world.

He merely hovered around the fount of tears in a state of rather silly indecision, suffering acutely from the shock which always accompanies an increase of knowledge of the baffling psychology of women. At the same time his emotions were not wholly unpleasant. He actually enjoyed the spectacle of her woe. The tears softened her. They gave her a touch of "nonsense" which hitherto, according to Jimmie's observation, she had lacked. They indicated to him that never in the future could he talk to her as to another man. Formerly he liked her because she could be treated as a male comrade. Now he liked her rather more because she had suddenly ceased to be a male comrade. Her tears melted her, and they melted him too.

As for Claribel, what she chiefly felt was resentment and disillusion. And she also enjoyed her tears. Then she remembered her Spartan youth, and with a heroical effort resumed command of herself. And then she opened her bag and began to rebuild her damaged complexion. Never in the old days would she have put powder to face in the presence of a man. But things were changed. Neither of them spoke a word. It was most ridiculous. Jimmie sat down again.

At length he said:—

"I'm awfully sorry. You shall have the portrait."

She looked at the radiator, there being no fire.

"But, of course," he added, "I shall give it to you. I really couldn't take anything for it."

Whereat she sobbed once more.

"Can't you see I can't accept presents from you?" she mumbled, inarticulately.

"I beg pardon," said he, comprehending nothing.

She made a new attempt.

"I say it's fearfully nice of you, but I can't accept presents from you."

"Then I'll sell it to you at any price you like," he yielded, beaten.

But she continued to weep and to mumble.

"I know what a genius you are, and I wanted to be able to say I'd bought a picture from you when you were unknown." And more loudly and distinctly: "However, it doesn't matter!"

Jimmie stood up again. He wanted to cry himself; for she had become to him the most touching and heavenly sight ever seen in the world. She had become exquisite, fragile, defenceless, and desirable. Simultaneously it occurred to him that in certain circumstances there is only one right method of stanching a woman's tears. He used that method.

THE mayor of the sixth arrondissement, with the French flag tied round his rich waist, united them in marriage. Claribel never knew that, had she begun to weep five seconds later than she did, the direction of her whole life would have been changed, for her sentiments would never have survived the blow of being asked for money when she was expecting to be asked for love. And Jimmie's heart would stop beating at the mere awful recollection of the moment when her tears in the nick of time saved him from stepping over a precipice into—into what?

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**NEXT MONTH:**

# "THE GARDENER,"

A new short story by

# RUDYARD KIPLING

# Ministering Angel

*By*

## ROLAND PERTWEE

*ILLUSTRATED BY*
*J. DEWAR MILLS*

DURING the reign of Edwardus VII Dei Gra : Britt : Omn : Rex Fid : Def : Ind : Imp :—which I have copied from a penny, for it is vain to pretend I knew it by heart—there was a little girl, the eldest of a family of four. And because it was Christmas they were to be taken to a pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. And there were rejoicings. But inasmuch as the father of this family forgot to buy the tickets in good time, he was only able to obtain four instead of five.

The mother said it was scandalous and supplied fresh evidence that nothing was done properly unless she herself did it.

He retorted that a man was not expected to remember all things, and how was he to have known the theatre was full ? He also said the work he did in the City made for weariness and there was little peace in the home. His wife said if he thought of others as devoutly as he thought of himself, there would be more peace.

So he slammed the door.

It will be seen that the argument was in capable hands and the weights were even.

But since it is not proper that children should visit a pantomime save under the ægis of a grown-up, the distressing fact arose that one of the family must perforce be left behind

And this being known, there were tears in the nursery—wailings and lamentation.

At the height of the tumult the voice of the little girl was lifted. Her name was Dora, and she said :—

" Stop your crying. *I'll* stay behind."

So they stopped their crying and agreed that it should be so. And none gainsaid her.

Presently a four-wheeled cab—a growler—collected and drove the family towards the West. Through the rattling windows they waved to Dora, who waved back from the doorstep. When the cab was gone round the corner she did not run upstairs and weep, but went smilingly into the drawing-room, where she darned a sock until it was time to go to bed. And a very pleasant evening she spent in the enjoyment of self-sacrifice, beside which pantomime tinsel and the astonishments of the transformation scene are poor alternatives.

And that is the prologue—a small affair, but no smaller than a seed.

DORA WINCHESTER possessed one rare quality. She never talked about herself. She knew that no one could be interested to hear what she thought, whom she had met, or whether she was well or ill. Why should they, so full of thoughts and meetings and bodily orders and disorders of their own ? Her *métier* was to save people trouble and make them happy, which, of course, left her with very little time for personal considerations. Her brother and sisters were the expressionists and she was the performer.

The world is divided into camps, and Dora knew to which camp she belonged. She had voluntarily enlisted herself as supply officer in a kind of Family Army Service Corps. She supplied everything, from buttons to sympathy. There was no charge and not much change. Fear may be felt that a girl so self-effacing would stand in danger of being overlooked by men in search of wives. But this was not the case, and old Mr. Winchester, her father, lived in a state of

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permanent anxiety that Dora would be snatched from his service. Mr. Winchester had his declining years to think of, and they were more important to him than a daughter's happiness. The rest of the girls were already married, or might be for all the use they had been about the house. By now other men were finding them out. But Dora was reserved for special duty. Husbands could wait.

Dora thoroughly understood and accepted her father's ruling, and even though there were nights when her pillow was wet with the tears of unsatisfied love, she put thoughts of marriage behind her. In this she was sustained by a sense of duty and the acute satisfaction of self-denial. Her father supplied permanent occasion for the sacrifice of her instincts, and, as everybody knows, self-sacrifice is its own reward.

Suitors came, pleaded, and were driven away, kissed and unkissed. Ever so many suitors—poor, sad wights going down the road. Dora's heart bled for them.

Some vowed they would wait—and one, in particular, actually waited. His name was Arthur Hanson, and he knew a good thing when he saw it. He was much run after on account of his position in the world, good looks, and the charm and courtesy of his address. But Arthur Hanson was deaf to the importunities of other maidens. He had set his heart on Dora and was constant. Dora's rare qualities had been revealed to him, and the qualities of others were poor by compare. He was not a man to marry blindly at the impulse of passion. He had seen too many matrimonial failures to behave rashly in so important a venture. Therefore he waited—for a certainty.

It may be wondered why he was so sure Dora was a certainty. And love should be the answer. But love is an emotion compounded of many practical elements, apart from and beyond the matter of a rising temperature.

Man being by nature an incurable optimist seeks to improve his condition in a variety of ways. He knows, and none better, that so far as in his power it lies he will never let himself down. He is his own staunchest friend and ally, and ministers to his needs and comforts with untiring exactitude. He is to himself the most perfect of hosts and entertainers. He knows what he likes and will take any trouble to get it. He knows what he enjoys hearing himself say, and he says it. In a multitude of ways he stands himself treat. But man is not as a rule highly imaginative, and a time arrives when he is sorely puzzled to think of a good turn to do himself. His invention breaks down before an iron door of boredom, a door of which woman holds the key.

"Open this," he cries, "and let me in."

But she, hidden on the far side amidst her mysteries and ministrations, heeds him not.

"Ho, there! Admit me," he shouts.

But is unheard.

"Abracadabra" will not turn the wards of that lock. Then his voice, weary with shouting, falls to a whispered:—

"I love you."

And the door swings back upon its hinges and she beckons him in.

After that anything may happen.

So here we have Arthur Hanson, patient sentry at the gate—and Dora with her mysteries and ministrations, and old Mr. Winchester crustily enjoying these good things, and time running through seasons.

Mr. Winchester might have clung to life long enough to put even Arthur Hanson to flight and finally scratch Dora from the matrimonial stakes—but it happened otherwise. The old boaster, secure in his comforts, tempted Providence once too often. He said he would live another twenty years, and the day he said it a taxi chased him under a bus, which put a stop to any more nonsense of that kind.

Arthur Hanson was best man at the funeral.

Dora Winchester dropped some flowers into the grave and wondered what else she could do for her father, and, turning away, cried because there was nothing.

And later, when the funeral baked meats had been devoured and there was nothing left on the sandwich plates but the cress and the labels, she sewed the loose buttons on Arthur's new gloves and brushed his hat and kissed him and said he had been "very, very dear and kind," and she didn't know what she would have done without him.

So very soon they were man and wife.

LET it be said outright that they were happy together. Arthur proved the most thoughtful of husbands, who never tired of inventing little kindly acts for Dora to do for him. And these she did gladly with others of her own invention. She gave and Arthur took and life was a dream. Nor is it surprising that this should be so, for where old Winchester had blamed Arthur praised. He praised her present or absent, to her face and behind her back. He said, and truly, there was never such a wife as Dora. He worshipped her in such generous measure that even if she failed in a minute detail his voice was never lifted against her in criticism or complaint.

So Dora popped out of the big arm-chair as Arthur dropped into it and their happiness was the envy of all beholders.

And then one day, after four years of perfect accord, a distant cousin of Dora's came from the United States of America and stayed with the Hansons. Her name was Mary Louise Saint, and she was very nice and good to look at.

This was her first visit to the United Kingdom, and it was natural that she should desire with celerity to form views upon the natives and crystallize in convenient form a composite man and a woman such as should fairly represent all Englishmen and Englishwomen.

Susceptible as are all travellers to first impressions, she fixed upon her host and hostess to supply the required elements. Being an earnest student of human nature she did not readily commit herself to an opinion, but remained quiet and attentive throughout the service of the first dinner in the Hansons' house before running upstairs to make notes. It was a most illuminating experience, even more illuminating than those pithy little articles of Rebecca West's.

To begin with, the room was very cold on all sides save one. There was no salad—no little dishes of vegetables dotted like islands round one's plate—no ice and no improving conversation.

Cousin Dora and her husband clung to their table knives—never once laying them diagonally across the rims of their plates and attacking their victuals politely with a fork. The talking was done by Arthur, who regarded talk as his monopoly. He imparted much that was severely dull about a place called the Oval and another place called Lord's, where, as the season advanced, he hoped to spend much of his leisure.

Mary Louise Saint, who hoped that Lord's had something to do with the aristocracy, was disappointed to learn that it was only a cricket ground.

Arthur Hanson went on and on and stood himself a thoroughly enjoyable conversation.

Cousin Dora never said a word. She used her pretty mouth as a depository for food. Every now and then she smiled at her husband encouragingly.

When the nuts and wine were put upon the table, Arthur addressed Dora for the first time. He said "Cigarettes, dear,"

and he gave her the key of a cigar cabinet.

In amazement Mary Louise Saint watched her hostess depart upon this menial errand as she might have been a slave.

When Dora returned, Arthur said :—

"Give your cousin a little Chartreuse, darling. Bottle's in that sideboard, and, while you're up, that box of matches."

Mary Louise Saint watched these instructions faithfully observed even unto the striking of a match for Arthur's cigar.

But Arthur was not quite ready for his cigar, so Dora stood by with another match until he was ready.

But Arthur was not quite ready for his cigar, so Dora stood by with another match until he was ready.

And Arthur never apologized, said thank you, or even nodded. The tyrant was oblivious of his tyranny.

Mary Louise Saint, accustomed to the slavish attention American husbands devote to the comfort of their wives, sat back in her chair and felt dizzy.

The pageant was too monstrous to be believed. If such conditions of slavery still existed, for what had the Battle of Gettysburg been fought and won? Was Arthur mad to behave so? Was he lacking in all sense of a husband's duty? Her cousin, too; where was her pride to allow herself to be thus abased? Mary Louise Saint admired strength in men and weakness in women, because, by establishing feminine weakness, masculine strength may be turned to profitable account. But weakness that served strength as opposed to the weakness that is served by strength was something that baffled her comprehension.

Arthur Hanson ordered—Dora Hanson smiled and did. And to the outward eye they were a happy pair. But what dark tragedy lurked behind that smiling service—what breaking of the spirit—what inexorable autocracy had made it possible?

Or was the answer—England?

If so the Turk hadn't much on the Britisher, Mary Louise Saint would tell the world in no uncertain voice. Already her

fingers itched to grasp the pen. She would head her article, "A Nation Exposed." But there was in Mary Louise a great fairness of disposition that would not allow her to condemn without certitude. She would give these people every chance to exalt or to hang themselves—every chance, and after that no quarter—not a speck.

She said in her lovely lilting voice :—

"I can't get used to your room fire heating. I'd be glad of my wrap, if it isn't a bother."

And Arthur Hanson said :—

"I think I saw it over a chair-back in the drawing-room, darling; and you might see if the evening papers have come."

After that Mary Louise Saint was free to act.

But she did not act rashly or in haste. She wrote a great deal and tore it up, for, although her observations on paper were clinching to the argument, they failed somehow to convey the fact that the atmosphere in which this oppression flourished was a serene and happy atmosphere. She was far too honest a chronicler to present horrible examples when the examples themselves refused to look horrid. What she had seen provided all the proper elements for a rebellion; but, alas! there were no rebels. Obviously, the lives of Arthur and Dora were all wrong, but nothing altered the fact that they appeared to be enjoying them. Her position therefore was delicate, and became increasingly so with the discovery that Arthur with all his faults was really a very decent and good fellow. She felt it would be a traitorous action to expose a man who was doing all that in his power lay to make her sojourn in England agreeable. Her analyses therefore found their way to the waste-paper basket, and very bravely she determined that there was nothing to do but have it out in words.

OPPORTUNITY arising a few weeks later, when Dora was out of the way, Mary Louise braced her shoulders and launched the attack.

Mary Louise said :—

"Cousin Dora has the sweetest disposition of any woman I have ever met."

"She has the sweetest disposition in the world," said Arthur, correctively.

The reply was somewhat stultifying, but Mary Louise did not lack for courage.

"And you," she said, "are a very gentle and kind man."

Arthur said :—

"What? Glad you think so. Hadn't struck me I was anything in particular."

"Very kind—but very, very selfish," she went on.

Arthur's eyebrows sailed upwards.

"Am I?" he asked. "Am I? P'r'aps I am, but in what way?"

"In the way you bully your very lovely wife."

Arthur flushed.

"But you're joking. Bully Dora? I'd die for her."

"Maybe you would," said Mary Louise, "but dying is a small and short affair compared with living. And most certainly you don't live for her. Oh, man! the way you make that gentle creature wait on you hand and foot is just criminal."

Arthur gave signs of genuine distress.

"This is a very serious indictment," he said, "and I'm sure you wouldn't make it without reason, but do be a bit more explicit."

"Cousin Arthur, I can be explicit in six words. Who sits in the best chair? Who sets all the jobs and does all the talking? Who invents the errands and who runs them? You're a cultured man and a fine chap, but if you acted in America as you act over here, I'm going to tell you you'd spend your married life single."

Arthur Hanson rubbed his chin nervously.

"This is awful," he said. "I hardly know how to answer. Do you really think I treat Dora badly?"

"There are some things one doesn't need to think about—one knows."

He was silent a longish while.

"You know, Mary, it isn't very often one hears the truth about oneself as frankly expressed as this, and it's a bit startling. I'm terribly distressed that I've given that impression. You see, we two are so happy—our marriage has been such a complete success that I suppose we haven't given much thought to the whys and the wherefores. I admit freely that I haven't bothered to examine my own contribution. Dora liked doing things and I let her. I took it for granted I was all right. But it seems I'm not all right. If what you say is true, I must be behaving like a pretty average swine."

"Not that, and I never suggested it," she interposed; "but I think it is that you English husbands don't ponder a great lot."

"We don't," he confessed. "We don't—but there's not the slightest reason why we shouldn't.

"Look here," he went on, "I'm immensely obliged to you for what you've said. If through any carelessness of mine our marriage came to grief, I'd—well, I'd never forgive myself. I'm one of those lucky men, Mary, who own a treasure, and if I fail to look after it there's nothing bad enough that I wouldn't richly deserve."

"Now let me say," said Mary Louise Saint, "that I consider the manner you've

taken this impertinent intrusion of mine into your private affairs marks you as a gallant and chivalrous gentleman and makes me feel like two cents."

"Oh, rubbish!" said Arthur. "You're a brick—a darling—and there's no other word."

NEXT day when Arthur came from the City he brought with him a posy, and said:—

"No, no—you sit there," when Dora sprang up to vacate his favourite chair. And during dessert he went and fetched his own cigars and himself poured out the liqueur—and twice ran upstairs on little errands, once to fetch a handkerchief for himself and once for Dora's vanity bag. And when dinner was over, he again insisted she should have the chair, and he urged her to tell them how and where she had spent the day—and he put on the gramophone records and changed the needles—and asked if they would like to go and dance anywhere, and noticed that Dora was looking "a little tired, dear," and hoped she hadn't been "overdoing it," and thought perhaps she had better "go to bed early" and have her "breakfast on a tray," and suggested an increase in their domestic staff so as to give her an opportunity "to take things a bit easier all round."

He behaved, in short, as he had never behaved before, and revealed such a remarkable gift for thoughtfulness that poor Dora, who was unused to the embarrassment of being considered and consulted, went to bed in a whirl of bewilderment and agitated misunderstanding. Never, never in the whole course of her life had she spent such an aimless and terrifying evening. Needlework had been wrested from her hands—she had been denied the performance of her lawful occasions. Over her body spread an imaginary sense of bruises caused by Arthur's repeated action in pushing her back into a chair from which she ardently desired to escape. Her legs were stiff from repose and disuse, and her larynx ached from the unaccustomed exercise of making conversation. He had cruelly prevented her from mixing his whisky and soda, thus proving that he liked it better when he mixed it himself. He had told her not to bother to order his tobacco on the morrow, as that was something to which he could conveniently attend on his way to the office. And finally he had kissed her and gone to sleep as though there was nothing on his mind and he had not been guilty of selfish and abominable conduct.

Unfamiliar with the habit of thought, Dora lay tossing and wakeful for long and miserable hours, striving without success to solve the riddle of this unaccountable change in his attitude. By refusing her service in the presence of a guest he had insulted her openly and struck a blow at the foundations of her existence. And why had he done it? Why? Was it not apparent to the most casual observer that what she did for him was done a hundred per cent. better than he could hope to do it for himself? Of course it was—for she had devoted her whole life to studying the needs of others. Unselfishness and attentiveness are not qualities to be acquired in a day. They call for delicate and patient cultivation.

The world is composed of plants and gardeners, each having their appointed duties and stations. A nice muddle there would be if the plants got hold of the water-cans and fancied themselves gardeners.

As well might she attack the mysteries of Arthur's City business as he presume to administer his own welfare. There was something behind it all—a hideous purpose. For a reason unknown he wished to put a slight upon her and prove that he could get along very well on his own. Came then a wave of acute self-pity such as she had never known before. Dora wept for the ministrations she had not been allowed to perform and the words of praise she had not been allowed to earn. She wept for the right to serve, and, since anger usually precedes or follows tears, her weeping shook itself dry before a hot and wrathful fire of indignation. She saw Arthur in a new and sinister form. No longer an adoring and adorable husband, but a plain, selfish man who cunningly contrived to rob her of her birthright. Yes, there he was—selfish to the core—a man who wouldn't let himself be looked after.

Of course, Dora's reasoning was muddled and turgid, but that was natural, since you cannot expect great clarity of thought from the possessor of an inferiority complex. Dora Hanson had developed her inferiority complex very handsomely, and it had been stamped upon.

She fell asleep at last from sheer exhaustion and woke with the hopeful belief that she had been visited by an evil dream. Her first conscious impression swiftly dissipated that illusion.

Arthur Hanson was sitting on the end of the bed sewing a button on to his trousers. He was using a yard and a half of thread and a needle as thick as a skewer. The eye of the needle was so wide that it would not penetrate the holes in the button without vigorous aid from a pair of pliers. The thread had snarled about half-way down, thus providing fresh cause for obstruction. On the reverse side of the trousers Arthur

had woven a kind of fishing net composed of a great variety of loops and tangles. The expression upon his face was one of patient determination. Observing that she was awake he projected at her a smile that must have been the envy of angels.

"Hullo, darling! You've had a good sleep."

Dora sat up sharply.

"What are you doing there?" she demanded. "You never told me a button was loose."

"Why should I bother you, dear? I can sew it on all right."

"You can't," said Dora. "Give it to me."

Arthur drove the needle this way and that through the fabric, broke the thread, and stood up.

"There you are. It's done. Stop in bed, sweetheart, and I will pop downstairs and get you some breakfast."

There was a convulsion of bed-clothes and Dora was facing him.

"I dare you to do it—dare you!" she cried. "I suppose you think because I said nothing last night that I didn't notice."

"Notice what?" he replied, with conscious innocence.

"You know very well what. So don't pretend. But if you think I'm going to be treated like an invalid or a lunatic, you're wrong."

Arthur was at sea.

"Isn't this rather foolish?" he queried. "Surely I've a right to look after you and see that you don't fag yourself doing things for me that I ought to be doing for myself?"

Dora dug her bare toes savagely into the thick pile of the carpet.

"You haven't a right," she wailed. "You haven't a right. You're trying to steal my job and break my heart."

"What are you doing there?" Dora demanded. "You never told me a button was loose."

"But, Dora dear, it's so infernally selfish——"

"Yes, it is—that's what it is——"

"Of me," he went on. "I realize how for years I've traded on your good nature, and isn't it natural I should want to make some return?"

"You say that," came the answer, "knowing it isn't natural and isn't true. You aren't pleased with me any longer, and this is your cowardly way of showing it."

"Dora, that's grossly unfair. I may have taken things for granted in the past, but that's all over now and there's going to be a new order between us. I'm going to make up to you for all you've done to me."

"So you mean to go on with it—mean to go on keeping me down?"

"Certainly not. I mean to give up keeping you down. I mean you to occupy the position you should occupy."

"But I do."

"No, darling, you don't," he replied, in a voice smooth and smug with conscious rectitude.

Dora looked at him, and never before had she looked at Arthur with such unloving eyes.

"I see," she said; "but you forget I may have something to say about that. Perhaps you think I'm a kind of doll that you can do what you like with. Try, and you'll find your mistake. I'm twenty-eight, Arthur, and I have made up my mind what I expect from life—what is my due. And I'm not going to have it altered to please anyone. Do you imagine that I'm anything less than I set out to be? I've made myself on the lines that suit me best, and I shall stick to them. You

have your own way of finding happiness, and it isn't mine. Mine is providing you with the happiness you're looking for, not watching you get it for yourself."

"But that's an impossible argument," said he.

"I don't care if it is," she went on. "I have a right to be considered, and I will be considered, and nothing you can say or do shall prevent it."

Arthur was bewildered and a little angry. He felt with justice that he had made a good start and would do still better as time advanced. He was not at all eager to have his efforts thus rudely sponged from the slate, especially as, on retiring for the night, he had captured an encouraging nod from Mary Louise Saint.

"I think," he said, with a touch of dignity, "it is hardly fair for all the unselfishness to be on one side."

"Or all the selfishness."

"But how can it be selfish to wish to serve others?" he countered, wildly.

Then it was that Dora made a most illuminating remark.

"Of course it's selfish. Selfishness is only doing what one wants to do. You want to be idle and comfortable and looked after, and I want to look after you and make you comfortable and let you be idle. No one but an idiot expects that everybody wants the same thing. If you tried to make me live the life I've made for you, I'd die of boredom."

And seizing his trousers she snipped off the button he had sewn with a great pair of scissors.

DORA was late for breakfast that morning, and Arthur Hanson attacked it in company with Mary Louise Saint. His mood was silent and thoughtful and he showed no disposition to talk.

Said Mary Louise Saint:—

"Your actions last night were very uplifting."

Said he:—

"Well, they nearly succeeded in lifting off the roof, you know."

"To make an entrance for the angels?" she queried.

"Perhaps," he replied.

"One angel is enough for any man," said Mary Louise, "and you've got yours, my friend, in Dora."

"Have I?" he said. "I wonder. I'm not at all sure that she isn't a very human being like the rest of us."

"A very unselfish human being, Cousin Arthur."

"The truth of that," said he, "depends upon the correct definition of the word unselfish."

"There can be only one, surely."

"On the contrary, there are several—several."

"Then hers is of the highest order."

"Of the most personal order," he corrected. "And because of that the most enduring."

Dora came into the room as Arthur rose from the table.

"It's so warm to-day," he said, "I sha'n't need a coat. So don't bother to see me out. By the way, you won't forget my tobacco, will you?"

Mary Louise Saint winced, started, and checked herself on the verge of a protest as before her eyes was enacted a strange and bewildering scene.

Dora Hanson moved towards Arthur with hands extended to coil about his neck. Her eyes were filmy with tears of unalloyed happiness.

"Dearest, dearest Arthur," she said, and kissed him and clung to him.

And he whispered:—

"Darling," with lips that caressed her ear.

"Well!" said Mary Louise Saint.

AND that is as far as it goes, or as far as anything goes that describes a circle—like the world—or like a snake eating its own tail, or like a story that comes back to its beginning in search of its end. For you will not have forgotten that during the reign of Edwardus VII Dei Gra : Britt : Omn : and all the rest of it . . .

# James James

*By*

## BARRY PAIN

*ILLUSTRATED BY D. L. GHILCHIK*

MR. SEPTIMUS MUSGRAVE HURDLE had many advantages. He was well-educated and quite good-looking. He was in the early years of what some hold to be the best decade of a man's life—from thirty to forty. He had a charming flat in Mayfair. He was a respected member of a good club. He had some pleasant friends. He had independent means, which he supplemented from time to time by certain activities.

These activities might be described, coarsely, as theft, but more accurately as the racing-and-betting variant of the confidence-trick. Except in so far as these activities were concerned, he was careful to be in all respects absolutely honest. If he found lost property in a cab, he took it to Scotland Yard, politely requesting that, if the article were claimed, the reward might be paid over to the Police Orphanage. He made an accurate income-tax return, except that he described his profits from theft as money earned, I am grieved to say, by the practice of authorship.

He was not known to the police and his finger-prints had never been taken, for he had never been found out. He did not associate with thieves nor understand their slang. He avoided every bar and restaurant where the clever crooks were supposed to foregather. He never employed any confederate, never trusted anybody, and never said one word to anybody of the *coup* in which he was engaged. He attempted nothing which he could not carry out alone. He had patience and would, if necessary, devote a month or six weeks to gaining the confidence of his victim. He thought out all possibilities and the method by which he would meet them. He was cautious, and more than once had abandoned a *coup*,

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even though it involved a money loss to himself, when he found that it involved greater risks than he cared to take.

He was not greedy, and his profits for the last three years had averaged only six hundred pounds per annum. His victims were always wealthy men—Americans or Colonials—and most of them would sooner put up with a loss of two or three hundred than confess their folly to the smiling police. Had they lost thousands instead of hundreds, they would not have let their pride prevail over their common sense. And so Mr. Hurdle went his way unsuspected and even respected.

He was not without humane qualities. When old Mrs. Chrome, who had long been his cook and housekeeper, was compelled by her health to give up work and to go to live with her married daughter, he treated her quite generously. True, he was faced with no very grave domestic problem. It is probably easier for a bachelor to find a housekeeper than for any woman to fill up a domestic vacancy. And it was principally kindliness that led him, though his advertisement demanded the services of a woman, to engage that curious little man, James James.

James James was absolutely frank. He arrived at ten on the morning that the advertisement appeared.

" I can't give you a personal character. I have a letter from the brother of the gentleman for whom I worked up at Elgin. I was in his service when he died, and had been with him two years. Here's the letter, and it speaks well of me, but the man who wrote it has gone to Canada, and can't see anybody for me."

Mr. Hurdle read the letter.

" Well," he said, " the note-paper's stamped with the right address."

" Yes, sir, and it's all correct. But it might not be. And then I'm not everybody's money, because I'm so short, almost a dwarf. I'm a teetotaller, a good valet, and a very good cook. I'm quite sure that I could do all the work of this flat better than most women. All I want is a chance. I've been out of work and living on my savings for the last six weeks, and it can't go on. Give me a chance and you'll never regret it."

" What do you mean by a chance ? "

" Let me put the kitchen and your bedroom in order, go over the suit you wore last night, and cook lunch and dinner for you. If you're dissatisfied at the end of the day, throw me out, sir, and pay me nothing. If you're satisfied, take me for a week on appro. Then, after that, if I deserve it, engage me regularly."

" Right," said Hurdle. " Get on with it."

In thirty seconds James James had his coat off and was very quiet and busy. At luncheon he served a soufflé of fish, a ragout of mutton with lyonnaise potatoes, and cheese fritters. It was made entirely from the cold remnants he had found in the kitchen, and was excellently cooked and served. Mrs. Chrome, even in her sunniest days, had never come within a mile of it.

" I shall be out this afternoon," said Mr. Hurdle. " For dinner I shall want simply a sole Colbert and a savoury omelette. At seven-thirty. Go out and buy what you want. I'll tell the porter to let you in. Here's ten shillings."

IN the afternoon Mr. Hurdle found from consulting the file of *The Times* at his club that a gentleman of the name that James had given had died on the date given at Elgin. None the less, he set various traps for James in the course of the week, and in every case the bait was left untouched. James got his engagement, and Mr. Hurdle congratulated himself that he had stumbled on a perfect treasure. Besides, the little man was always smiling and happy, as if he enjoyed his work.

It was at this time that Mr. Hurdle was engaged with Mr. Albert Child.

Hurdle made it his practice to lunch or dine from time to time at one or other of the hotels most patronized by wealthy strangers. Sometimes he overheard things that were useful. Sometimes he put a question to a waiter.

On this occasion he noted an elderly man seated at a table not far from him and in front of him. The elderly man was dressed in brand-new clothes of unmistakable American cut. He had before him two large dishes, one containing more mashed potatoes than anybody could possibly want, and the other fried sausages to an equal superfluity. By his side he had a silver tankard, a bottle of the highest-priced champagne on the list, and a large bottle of stout. From these he poured sometimes one and sometimes the other into the tankard.

His procedure was so unusual that Mr. Hurdle felt himself justified in putting a question. Pointing with his thumb he said to the waiter : " Do you know who that freak is ? "

" Yes, sir," said the waiter, confidentially. " That's Mr. Albert Child. Staying here. Comes, I believe, from the wilder parts of America. Very wealthy gentleman, I understand."

" Why don't somebody teach him how to live ? " asked Mr. Hurdle.

" Ah, yes, sir. Why indeed, sir ? Perfectly shocking," said the waiter, sympathetically.

Mr. Albert Child seemed absolutely

unperturbed. He wanted sausages and mashed potatoes and he had got them, and his appetite was excellent. He was indulging for the first time in his life in a drink of which he had heard on board the boat, known as the King's Peg. His complexion, including his bald head, deepened rapidly from a pale pink to a strong magenta. Mr. Hurdle felt that here was an absolute present for him. The only thing that troubled him was that it seemed impossible that anybody so rich, so bovine, and so completely innocent had not already fallen into the hands of the wicked.

**"I'm not everybody's money, because I'm so short. I'm a teetotaller, a good valet, and a very good cook."**

Next morning Mr. Hurdle was in the hotel lounge at ten. It seemed unlikely that anybody who had lunched in so injudicious a way on the day before would be out and about before eleven, but at ten minutes past ten Mr. Albert Child, with his hat on, came blowing along the central passage and bestowed unnecessary largesse on the waiter who opened the outer glass door for him. Mr. Hurdle quickly followed, but this time he drew blank. He could not find a suitable opportunity to carry out his favourite *coup*.

The next morning he was more successful. As Mr. Child was entering the booking-hall of the Tube station, Mr. Hurdle, in the act of thrusting a note-case into his breast-pocket, pushed by him. The note-case fell on the floor, but Mr. Hurdle went on, apparently oblivious.

"Hi, you!" called Mr. Child. Hurdle turned round.

"You dropped that," said Mr. Child, tapping the case with his stick.

It might conceivably have been done more graciously, but Mr. Child did not cultivate the graces. Hurdle flew at the note-case, picked it up, took one glance inside, and then grasped Mr. Child warmly by the hand.

"My dear sir," he said. "How can I thank you? I wouldn't have lost that case for five hundred pounds." The total value of the case and contents was at the time three-and-sixpence. "It is, of course—you are obviously a gentleman—impossible to offer you any reward. But if there is any charity in which you are interested——"

"There is not. I am not interested in any charity. I disapprove of charity."

"At any rate, sir," said Hurdle, "you must give me an opportunity to thank you a little better. Are you going anywhere in any great hurry?"

"I was going to the British Museum."

"It will be there to-morrow, you know."

"So I should imagine."

" Do just step across the road and have a drink with me. You have no idea what a kindness you have bestowed on me. Let me at least have an opportunity of thanking you properly."

" I don't mind," said Mr. Child. " Matter of fact, it's rather lonesome at my hotel. If I speak to anybody it's like as if they were up in the stars talking down to me in the mud. I take it this is not a friendly country."

" Friendly ? Oh, I hope so. But we have not got the natural easy manners that, if I may say so, distinguish yourself. Come along, then."

They went along. Under the gentle influence of two-thirds of a bottle of champagne Mr. Child became both confidential and boastful. He had money, he said, money to burn. The diamonds in the rings on his shop-soiled hands were not flash, but the real thing. He came from the far West and he had made his money in real estate. Further explanations showed that his father had bought virgin land for a song and he himself had sold it as things developed.

" I don't brag," said Mr. Child. " But I consider I'm as good as the next man."

" And a good deal better in many cases," said Hurdle.

" Very well. But why is it that you're the first man that's said a friendly thing to me since I stepped ashore at Liverpool ? I've been open with you. Would you mind telling me how you make your living ? "

" Certainly," said Hurdle. " I make it by backing horses."

" Never been at a horse-race in my life," said Mr. Child. " Never made a bet in my life. Never drank champagne in my life till we were leaving New York behind us."

" Ah, you've got Prohibition, haven't you ? "

" Prohibish nothing. I got a cellar at home stacked up with rye whisky enough to last my time. Enough for a man to swim in. But this champagne, mind, hasn't come my way before. I like it. But tell me, if you make money by backing horses, how do you know they're going to win ? "

" I don't always," said Hurdle, laughing. " But I study the form and I spend a lot of money on getting good information. I don't often make a mistake. I'll prove it to you. Put a pound on Beetle for the three-thirty race to-day. The price is short. You may not get better than threes. But it'll show you whether I know anything or not."

" I don't know how to do it," confessed Mr. Child. " Perhaps you'd take the pound and——"

" Oh, no, that doesn't matter, a trifle like that. I'll 'phone a bookmaker. Meet me here to-morrow at this time and I shall expect to have something for you. You won't mind if I rush off. The sooner I get on the better the price will be."

FOR a week after that the two men met every day. Mr. Child made four bets under the direction of Mr. Hurdle, never staking more than one pound. According to Hurdle, who paid over, Mr. Child had won the first and second, lost the third, and won the fourth. Mr. Child was eleven pounds to the good and was beginning to think that there might be something in this horse-racing. Hurdle also took Child to see the sights of London, flattered him grossly, and gave him much good advice—as, for instance, hints on the propriety of using rather more soap and rather fewer diamonds for the hands.

But at the end of a week Hurdle, patient man though he was, had had enough of it. Every day he took a risk that Mr. Child might fall into the hands of other operators. He decided it was time to finish the thing off. And for that purpose he invited Mr. Child, who was a gross eater, to consume a dozen oysters and a porterhouse steak at a City restaurant.

Luncheon lasted a long time. At the end of it, when the coffee had been brought, the two men were alone in the room save for waiters and a little old lady who was reading the current number of the *Sunday at Home*. Hurdle had quite cleverly led Mr. Child up to the right point.

" Look here," said Child. " In this week I've made twelve pounds by betting and lost one. You've probably done the same. Can you live as you live on eleven pounds a week ? "

" The answer to that," said Hurdle, " is that I've not done the same. It's true that I backed the horses that you backed. But I backed them for fifty and a hundred pounds."

" Then why didn't you make me back them for the same ? "

" It's obvious. We might have lost. What would you have thought of me then ? Why, man, if you'd given me in charge I couldn't have blamed you. Just a pound for amusement with a small bookmaker was all right. Personally I never bet with a bookmaker."

" No ? Why not ? "

" Can't afford it. These bookmakers leave a good deal too much behind them when they die. That means they pinch the prices. I bet in my own club, and the club's the bookmaker. It's a mutual business. Every year there's a balance sheet and a distribution of dividends, and I get the right price, too. I can put a couple of hundred on a six to one chance, and win,

and be certain to pick up twelve hundred within ten minutes of the result coming through on the tape. But of course I'm a professional backer. You're just doing it for fun."

"Suppose I wasn't. Could you make me a member of that club?"

"I couldn't even propose you, not having known you five years, as the rules require."

"What's the name of the club?"

"I can't even tell you that, and I'll show you why I can't. In this country they leave you alone if you're betting on credit, but they come down on you if you're betting for cash. For various reasons, some of which you can possibly guess, all the transactions of this club are cash transactions. We've not been raided yet and we don't want to be."

**"Look here," said Child. "In this week I've made twelve pounds by betting and lost one. You've probably done the same. Can you live as you live on eleven pounds a week?"**

"I see," said Mr. Child, who didn't. "Well, you needn't have been so nervous about me and my money. I have some. If I lost two hundred and fifty pounds on a single bet I could stand it. You wouldn't hear me squeal. See here." He drew out his pocket-book and opened it. "Look at that wad. I've not counted it recently, but there'll be over four hundred there. Is there any reason why I shouldn't hand you two hundred and fifty and ask you to put it on the next good thing? You could act for me, I suppose?"

"Well," said Hurdle reluctantly, "I could."

And in the end Mr. Hurdle accepted two hundred and fifty pounds in notes of various values, for which he gave a receipt with a false name and address. The money was to be invested in a race to be run two days later on a horse which at present figured in the betting at thirty to one.

"Thirty to one," said Mr. Child. "Seven thousand five hundred to come if I win."

"That's right," said Hurdle.

The old lady who had been reading the *Sunday at Home* now got up and left. She entered a taxi and drove to the mansion where Mr. Hurdle had his flat, and there she had about three minutes' talk with Mr. James James.

When Mr. Hurdle returned home that night and retired to rest he had two hundred and fifty pounds in notes in a case under his pillow. In the morning James James brought him his cup of tea, his letters, and the morning paper, and drew back the curtains. Mr. Hurdle drank his tea.

When he recovered consciousness it was three in the afternoon. The note-case was still under the pillow, but the notes were not there, and on investigation he found that Mr. James James was not in the flat, And as Mr. James James had taken his belongings with him, there seemed to be no possibility that he would ever return to it. Nor did he.

Mr. Hurdle's head was very bad. He went back to bed and slept again until the evening. Then he worked the whole thing out. It was just two days after his first encounter with Albert Child that James James had offered himself for the post. Since then, Hurdle had no doubt, he had been kept continuously under observation by the agents of James James.

And he was sore afraid of that miserable little man.

It was three months before he had recovered his nerve sufficiently to resume his usual activities.



*(Another story in this series will appear shortly.)*

# Reminiscences and Reflections

*By*

## PRINCE NICHOLAS of GREECE

LIFE AS A PRINCE IN ATHENS—
THE LOSS OF A KINGDOM—
A ROYALTY IN EXILE—
BEGINNING THE WORLD AFRESH—
THE JOYS OF BEING ONE'S OWN MASTER—
STORIES OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

ALL my life I have envied the bread-winners! Over and over again I have said to myself that when a man has written a great play or book, or painted a great picture, he must have reached the height of his ambition. Or, without even aspiring to immortality, to have a profession, to live out of the limelight, to be one's own master, to earn money, seems well worth while. Indeed, had it been possible to change my destiny, how willingly I would have left my place as King's son to someone else and devoted all my energies to becoming an actor or an artist!

We were brought up to believe, however, that a King's son is born to special obligations; that a Royal Prince has to put his duty to his country first of all, and his private wishes—well, he forgets them altogether. His career then has to be his Royalty and all the pleasant and irksome duties that go with that exalted rank.

My father, the first of a new dynasty, was perhaps even more particular in giving each of us Princes our special duties than he would have been had he inherited his throne. When from being a Danish Prince he became King George I. of Greece, he made a solemn vow that Greece should be his first thought. He lived and worked and reigned to make Greece great; he died for Greece.

More Greek possibly than the Greeks themselves, we were taught that we must live first of all for the welfare of Greece. Every opportunity was taken of reminding the people that, though our father was born in Denmark, we were Greek Princes. Greek was our language; the Greek Church was our church; Greek charities were our charities—we made the welfare of our country almost a religion. How then was it possible for one of my father's sons to cast aside his Royal station, much as I longed to do so?

Since, then, the welfare of Greece had to come first, everything possible was done by the Royal Family to please Greek *amour propre*. We were living in the cradle of the world's culture; we had to be educated in Greece—there could be no alternative.

No one, however, will ever quite understand what a sacrifice we made when we

gave up our wish to go to a British Public School and University. The language we spoke in the home was English; most of our cousins had been educated in England, and it seemed only natural that we too should be educated in an Anglo-Saxon country. Besides, we felt, and our parents felt, that our young characters would have been better for a good schooling in British sport and the gospel of "fair play." In Greece we could have all the erudition we required; only in an Anglo-Saxon country does one learn that the greatest business cleverness is the cleverness that comes from a "square deal," and all my life I have personally felt the need of an Anglo-Saxon education. Even now it is as though something were lacking in my composition. In the terrible storms we have had to weather we needed the staying-power this education gives—yet so great was our love of Greece that without hesitation in this matter of education, as in the case of my career, we allowed ourselves to be sacrificed on the High Altar of politics.

My father, however, took the keenest interest in our education. He procured for us the very best University professors and tutors. A German schooled us in order, discipline, and thoroughness. A French-Swiss taught us to appreciate and respect the great traditions in which we were privileged to live—from him came my love and understanding of art, the drama, and literature—in fact, all the little culture I have. For these precious treasures I am indeed grateful—what would one do without them now? And so for the rest it is useless to regret what it is too late to change.

Prince Nicholas of Greece.

One of my father's great ambitions was to establish an Eton College in Greece. He loved the Greeks loyally and sincerely, but he understood their weaknesses. How he longed to graft this precious asset of British education on to Greek education! It would have been just the right balance for the brilliant Greek mind and their world-renowned business capacity. For this experiment, however, it would have been necessary to bring British professors to Greece. Imagine the cry of alarm that would have been heard had the erstwhile Danish Prince, brother of the Queen Mother of England, brought British professors to Greece to bring Greek youth up in the way it should go!

So the idea was abandoned! It is a thousand pities it could not have been tried. Alas, if only Greek youth could have been taught the glorious Anglo-Saxon creed, that to sacrifice one's own private advantages and opinions for the public welfare is a great ideal, we, the Reigning House, would be in Greece to-day.

As early as possible my father set himself the task of reviving Greece's past glory—her dramatic art. Into this work he threw himself with all his accustomed zest and purpose. He built the Royal Theatre, and paid for it mostly with his own money, but partly with the money given to him by some rich Greeks abroad to spend as he thought fit. This scheme appealed to me particularly. Here was a chance for me. I hated politics—I was the third son, therefore far from the succession. Since a career of my own was out of the question, I could see that my compatriots' talent had its chance—the encouragement of Fine Arts would be my work. This theatre, then, became a very serious interest. We formed our reading committee from amongst our best writers—they chose the plays to be translated and supervised the translations. In this way English, French, German, Italian, and Ancient Greek plays were first translated and then acted in Modern Greek. The actors and actresses were also chosen with very great care, and often by the King himself, and many of our great artistes to-day owe their success to the opportunity given to them of appearing at the Royal Theatre.

With the staging, we were not only particular over the minutest detail but often very extravagant. When we acted Sardou's "Théodora" and the works of a Greek dramatist, Cleon Rangahi, we sent to Coburg for the properties. Byzantine dramas are costly productions, yet so much did my father love this ideal—the revival of Greek drama—that he gave his time and money without stint. One would not dare to say what this theatre cost him.

Sometimes now, when I see how meanly some of the European plays are staged, and

above all when I see how often no comfort is offered to the artistes, I think of our splendidly-equipped theatre and the comfortable, carefully-planned dressing-rooms, and am glad our people had the best we could give them. From the Royal box to the stage we had a passage built which allowed us to go on to the stage between the acts, chat with the performers, and criticize their work. I was a kind of stage-manager and helped to coach the players. We had five performances a week, and I was present at most of the rehearsals as well as at the performances, and enjoyed the work immensely. Our players certainly had the satisfaction of knowing we were working with them and doing all in our power to see that their efforts were appreciated.

On the stage of our theatre the world's greatest actors and actresses have played. How proud we were to welcome them! Sarah Bernhardt, La Duse, Coquelin, Novelli, and Mounet Sully were some of the great players who visited us and were naturally highly appreciated.

For the performance of the foreign players the theatre was crowded. Had the theatre, then, been built as a speculation, we should always have had foreign players. The King's idea, however, was, as I have said before, not to make money but to revive Greek drama, and so for many years he persisted in giving Greek dramas, though he had little response. The Greeks are essentially a "summer people"—that is to say, they are accustomed to "open air" theatres. In the winter they preferred to spend their evenings with their friends, and my father's wish that they should all dress for the theatre was for a long time not at all well received.

It amused me at that period, too, first of all to translate and later to write plays. Some were well received, or at least I thought so. Naturally I could not judge my own work, but to me it was an enormous pleasure to see my own creations, poor though they possibly were, represented on the stage of our theatre.

My father, knowing that I loved dramatic art and understood the reason why he had created the Royal Theatre, left it to me. The present Governors of Greece, however, have confiscated it, declaring that the revenues of the theatre were a source of illicit gain for me, it having been built with foreign capital. As a matter of fact, I never made one cent out of my theatre.

But not only in the theatre—in every branch of art, social welfare, and in all charities we did the very best we could for the people we loved so dearly, and who loved us and still love us, in spite of what certain politicians may say. Up till the war none could have led a happier life than we did in Athens. We lived in an atmosphere of perpetual sunshine. We were the servants of the people—that is as it should be.

Except for ceremonial occasions we dispensed with Court etiquette, which in Greece, thank God, was never very strict. Our people called us by our Christian names and we loved the familiar form of address. For instance, anyone meeting me in the street would say, if he had seen my brother, "I saw George," whereas had I seen his brother I should have used the prefix Mr. Another charming and familiar form of address was the opening of Royal addresses—"Wasel eff"—"Oh! King." The King was spoken to in the second person singular—"thou."

MY father often travelled through Greece and took my mother, Queen Olga, with him. The peasants loved him, and all who wished came to give an account of themselves—their joys as well as their sorrows. It was not easy travelling in those primitive places, and when my mother asked for water to wash they had often nothing in which to bring it. But she thoroughly enjoyed her trips, all the same, and the social work and hospital work she did for Greece ought never to be forgotten by any political party.

We were always and are still a most loyal and united family. In the old days we lived together as much as possible and we ate together whenever we had an opportunity. For dinner my father always insisted on our dressing; even for a *tête-à-tête* dinner we dressed and wore a Greek star—it was a form of discipline. Always kindness itself though severe, my father's will was respected. He absolutely forbade us to speak about politics, and no criticism of the Ministers of State was ever allowed. How wise he was! If only some of the Ministers could have exercised the same loyalty to the Sovereign! For the rest, the King gave many big dinners to the Corps Diplomatique and distinguished foreigners. There was music, refreshments being served standing. No one smoked—that was etiquette.

My house was a wedding gift from the Czar and was considered by many the prettiest house in Athens. What a pride we took in furnishing it! How attached we became to all our books and pictures and souvenirs! Now that we are knocking about Europe ourselves like a band of gipsies, we long more than ever for our household gods. There is an eternal sorrow in the pictureless walls of hotels and a hideous monotony in other people's furniture.

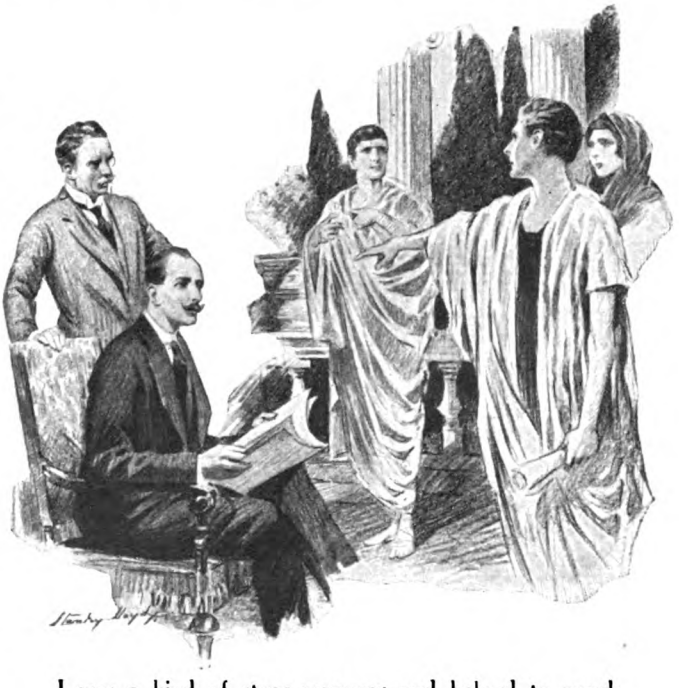
Particularly on *fête* days—at Christmas—

all the old souvenirs come knocking at my poor memory. My father forgot no one—grown-ups, children, and servants all had presents, and when the great doors were drawn back and the laden tables seen under the large Christmas-tree, the children could not refrain from screaming with joy and we, the grown-ups, would have done the same had we dared. What a number of other memories I could recall of those happy days! Alas, all that remains now of that happiness is our still united family—united in our bitterest sorrow. Fate has scattered us over Europe—we camp here and there—London, Paris, Cannes, and Rome, but nothing will ever shake our loyalty to one another. How soon joy ends! It seemed to us then that our happiness founded on mutual love must go on for ever.

Of our cruel days of exile—doubly cruel when one realizes that the late King had done nothing to deserve such a fate—what can be said? Old and trusted friends deserted us: it was difficult to make new ones. The events which had just happened made us doubly sensitive. We began even to dread showing ourselves anywhere. We felt like prisoners who had served a sentence for a crime they had not committed. Added to this the Russian revolution robbed many of us of our wealth. I had to accept the proposal of turning my house into an hotel in order to save it from a worse fate; the palace my father built, and in the grounds of which he is at rest, is in the hands of others, and King Constantine sleeps in a foreign land. As for my mother, without her deep faith how could she exist at all? With exquisite resignation, "We must not question the will of God," she says, and yet seventeen of her relations, including her brother and her son-in-law, were butchered in a fortnight. Then there was added to the tragic assassination of her husband the death of her son, King Constantine, and her grandson, King Alexander.

A CHANGE of social position is always hard, but surely the descent from a throne is the hardest fate of all. We Royalties are brought up in a manner which does not exactly fit us to begin life again when we are middle-aged. We are taught the all-important lesson of *Noblesse oblige*, but of what use is that to the man who has to fight his way against the world? Our outlook on life is often too blinkered—we are apt to live in an atmosphere of flattery—we are spared many kicks and hardships which form character and prepare one for life—then all of a sudden, when it pleases the politicians, our throne has gone and we have to face life unprepared. We are not even pensioned when we are put on the retired list. What business firm would do this? To rob a Royalty of his status is like putting out the eyes of an artist. What has he really left? What can he do? For us all, these were moments of unforgettable anguish. At times we seemed even to lose the faculty of thought and feeling. We were standing helpless and the whole edifice was crumbling. When I think of it all to-day, it seems as though it had happened to someone else.

There is no cloud, however, without a silver lining, and those terrible and unforgettable days were brightened by the certainty that our beloved aunt, Queen Alexandra, knew that the things they said about us could not be true. She knew what England has meant and always will mean



I was a kind of stage-manager and helped to coach the players.

**On our return we had to give an account of our day's excursion to King Edward.**

for us. What people said did not make any difference to her kindness to us. She was bitterly sorry for us. Yet her loyalty to England naturally came first of all.

When my father became King of Greece, he alone could tell what the encouragement and affection of his sister meant to him. He was just eighteen when he became King. At that period he was a merry lad who loved a practical joke perhaps more than the ordinary boy. The very day they came to offer him the throne of Greece he was being severely censured for nailing his professor's goloshes to the ground. The poor man stepped into them but could not walk away. And he was furious, for he looked so utterly ridiculous!

For a merry, happy-go-lucky youth of eighteen suddenly to put aside his pranks and become King of Greece—a country which was just recovering from a Revolution which had cost the first sovereign his abdication—required more than the average courage. But my father was made of the right stuff, and what he undertook to do—he did.

Queen Alexandra, his dear friend and confidante, understood all his difficulties. She was proud of his courage—his achievement, and the Greece he had built up in his fifty years' reign. No wonder she felt so bitterly the humiliation and sorrow that was our lot!

It was always a happy time for us when as children and young men we went to England or Denmark—our cousins were about our own age and equally full of mischief. And we loved our dear aunts and profoundly respected them. King Edward was an admirable host, but he was not so lenient towards our pranks as our aunts; he liked us to make the most of our stay in England and to improve our minds. With this end, he sent us out daily with one of his equerries to visit the monuments and historical buildings, and on our return in the evening we had to give an account of our day's excursion in pure eloquent English! Queen Alexandra, on the contrary, wanted us above all to have a good time.

WHEN our aunts came to Denmark they loved to cast aside the cares of state and as much etiquette as possible, and lead the simple life with us all.

Queen Alexandra would not change in any way the life she had led as a young Danish Princess. She used herself to carry the tray with a jug of milk into the garden when her mother, then Queen of Denmark, whom we called Amamma, was resting in a bath chair. After her marriage she insisted on continuing this practice.

One day my father rode his bicycle accidentally over her favourite dog, and, anxious above all to save her pet, she dropped the tray and rushed towards the dog, and herself fell in the attempt. One of her knees was stiff, which made the picture even more funny, and I very impertinently began to imitate her. She had the keenest sense of humour, and her anger was quickly turned into laughter. Indeed, so keen was her sense of humour that she constantly used to call me to act this funny scene and imitate her limp, which amused her more than I can describe.

Another day, I remember, my brother George and I called Queen Alexandra and

the Empress Marie into our room. Before they could understand what was happening, we had put our dressing-gowns round them, our hats on their heads, and popped them under our quilts. Then we solemnly went and invited our grandfather, King Christian of Denmark, and our uncle, Prince Valdemar, to come to our room, where we had a curiosity to show them. They both came, and were amazed to see what appeared to them to be two men, with hats on their heads, tightly tucked up in our beds. But our aunts gave the show away by laughing loudly. The laughter became even louder when our grandfather, pulling the bed things aside, disclosed their wonderful " get-up."

One day we all decided to pay a visit to the Zoological Gardens at Copenhagen. What particularly amused us children was a large cage full of monkeys. We went up to them and watched their grimaces and pranks, which fascinated us, probably because they unconsciously reminded us of our own.

I remember that the Empress Marie was wearing a straw hat with a bunch of red cherries; she and Queen Alexandra were just as interested and amused as ourselves, and rather imprudently approached the cage at very close quarters. Suddenly one of the little monkeys, who apparently had been watching the Empress's hat with particular attention, caught hold of the cherries. My aunt, rather alarmed, tried to get away, but the little monkey held tight and tugged the other way; this movement, backwards and forwards, went on for some seconds, till the monkey let go and the hat, which was fastened by an elastic at the back of her hair, returned with a snap and settled on her ear. I shall never forget how Queen Alexandra was literally doubled up with uncontrollable mirth, much to the distress of her poor sister!

What made the scene even more amusing was that the Royal sightseers were surrounded by a crowd of people who stood at a respectful distance watching the fun.

No one will ever know what Queen Alexandra gave away in charities, nor how many writers and artists and musicians she helped. She felt all their woes so keenly, and was herself almost broken-hearted when her *protégés* did not turn out as she could have wished.

Once she induced King Edward to offer a suite of rooms in Buckingham Palace to a British sculptor. She loved his work, and she supposed that with his talent the more comfortable and luxurious his surroundings were the better would be his work. Alas, he did nothing at all! The atmosphere of the Palace killed all his inspiration. Poor Queen Alexandra! How keenly she felt all these disappointments!

It is hard to realize that our beloved aunt is now at rest. To us all she was a member of our family, *far more* than a relation. The devotion and respectful adoration that all the English people felt for her was equalled only by the love and limitless affection which all her relations bore in their hearts for this sweetest, kindest, and most beautiful of ladies. She was above all the truest and the best of friends.

**Queen Alexandra used herself to carry the tray with a jug of milk into the garden.**

It is impossible to describe the blank that the passing of Queen Alexandra leaves in our lives. When I have the necessary concentration I will try to write about this dearest of aunts, whose death now severs one of the most vital links that bind me to the memory of my father. May God give her eternal peace.

# THE THOUSAND-POUND EMERALD

By

# L. J. BEESTON

ILLUSTRATED BY S. H. VEDDER

SHEPHERD sat on a cane-bottom chair—or on the aperture where the canes had been—with his heels on the ledge of the open window, and a cigarette of questionable quality pendent from his lower lip. The darkening evening was creeping over Small Porter Street, and not doing it any harm, for Small Porter Street had no beauty from one squalid end to the other squalid end.

Shepherd said to himself: "Somewhere in the world is a thousand pounds belonging to me. Ah, if only I knew where! It exists; it always must exist; but so might the proverbial needle in the proverbial haystack."

A cryptic thought which can be at once unravelled. A year ago had died in London a man named Edmond Grindon, who was at one time a wealthy man, and Shepherd's friend; but a run of evil fortune had melted his riches, and his ill luck had been aggravated by the mysterious disappearance of a somewhat valuable ring. This was a very fine emerald, as flawless as an emerald can ever hope to be, with two comparatively ordinary diamonds, one on either side of the green beauty. In his will, Grindon, wishing to leave his friend something, and having uncommonly little to leave, gave him the emerald ring—should it ever turn up. The jewel was worth a clear thousand; and the bequest of it, in the circumstances, seemed worth about twopence, if not substantially less.

Shepherd only heard of it when he came home from the Western plains, his finances ebbed right out. London worrying him in general, and Small Porter Street in particular, he ached to get back to the Western plains, and ten hundred pounds would have floated him there nicely.

He muttered to himself, the pendent cigarette jerking uneasily:—

"If I kept thinking about it I should be a fool; and as I am not that, I refuse to let it jag my nerves. It is somewhere in the wide-wide, but I guess it might as well be under the ocean. It may be on the finger of a duchess; it may be lying *perdu*, or in the safe of some rascally receiver; or perhaps it was gathered up with the dust, and has been incinerated, and as a chemical gas floats about in the empyrean. In the meantime I thank old Grindon—for nothing, and obliterate it from memory's halls."

A prolonged and distressful fit of coughing sounded in the room behind him. Shepherd listened, an uneasy frown upon his forehead, for pain in others always depressed him.

"That poor chap's got it bad," he reflected. "Been here a week now. I wonder they took him in, for he's in a real bad way."

The coughing ceased at last, and the sounds of gaspings for breath came through the lath and plaster.

"It doesn't add to the cheerfulness of this abode," said Shepherd to himself. "What a hole! And what am I, with my thews and sinews only twenty-eight years old, doing here? If I don't get out mighty quick I shall run the danger of getting used

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to this. That's a ghastly thought. The poverty and the sordidness will eat a way into me like a disease, and I shall stop seeing that it *is* poor and sordid. Ah, if I thought that—if I——"

He checked his fear abruptly, for he sufferer on a bed in the corner, affected his nerve and dragged at his spirit. But he fought off repulsion and stepped up to the side of the bed.

"I am sorry to see you like this," said Shepherd.

**"Sit down, will you? I'm afraid I haven't much breath. I ought to have spoken to you before, but I put it off and off—— "**

fancied that someone was calling his name. He listened, but renewed coughing from the next room made any further calling inaudible. He opened his door and waited. The coughing ended, and he heard his name again, uttered in a husky appeal, and the sound came from the sick room.

Shepherd instantly turned the handle and entered.

"Do you want help?" he asked, solicitously.

"Is that you, Mr. Shepherd?"

"Yes."

"Please come in; I want to see you."

A shiver of repugnance ran over Shepherd. The smell of some disinfectant, the intolerable poverty, the starved glimmer from a small brass hand lamp on a table, and more than all these the spectacle of the

He unfeignedly was sorry, especially as he realized from what the feeble light showed him that he was looking at a comparatively young man. Heavy with sweat the dark hair hung over the forehead, and fever glowed in the hollows of the cheeks.

"That's all right," answered the other, with the ghost of a smile. "I'll get over this; and if I don't, what's it matter? Sit down, will you? I'm afraid I haven't much breath. I ought to have spoken to you before, but I put it off and off——"

He stopped, the ragged counterpane which he had pulled up over his chest rising and falling rapidly.

"Take it easy, and whisper; I can hear you," implored Shepherd. "Just give a hint as to how I can be of assistance."

He waited three or four minutes before

the other found sufficient strength to go on.

"You came to England a month ago," he said. "I only knew it recently. I learned that you were living in Small Porter Street, and I took a room here. I had to make a change, for they wouldn't keep me where I was. My cough—they said it was tuberculosis, but it isn't; it is just inflammation, and I'll master it yet."

"Yes, yes; keep quiet," soothed Shepherd. "You wanted to see me. Is that it?"

"I wanted to help you get your property. The ring that Mr. Grindon left you. It's worth several hundreds. I know where it is."

The struggle for speech was so painful that it alarmed Shepherd out of the surprise he would otherwise have felt.

"Wait until you are better," he urged.

"Yes, I mean to get better; but if I don't, if I go under—— Listen, please. I know where it is, because I took it."

This did give Shepherd a shock of astonishment. He echoed, after a silence: "You—took it?"

"I stole it, yes. I was Mr. Grindon's valet. My name is Bradley. When it happened he was staying at a house in Grandly Street, Bedford Square. Mr. Peering's, number twenty-two. I found it in the bathroom there. Mr. Grindon took it off his finger when he went into the bathroom, and came out without it. The temptation hit me at a bad time. I had lost all my savings on a horse. Can you hear what I am telling you?"

"Every word."

"Before it was missed I made up my mind to hide it. On the ground floor at the back of the house is a room used as a study, and on the mantelpiece are two tall candlesticks which Mr. Grindon gave to Mr. Peering, who used to admire them. I have cleaned them, and I knew that the bottoms of the brass candlesticks can be unscrewed. I went to the study and I hid the ring, wrapped in a piece of cotton-wool, in the shaft of one of the candlesticks. I meant to take an early opportunity of removing it; but my master and Mr. Peering quarrelled soon after, and we were never in the house again."

THE sick man closed his eyes and was silent, exhausted by the effort of talking. It was impossible for Shepherd not to feel a touch of excitement. He waited a few minutes and then ventured the question:—

"You believe that the ring is still where you put it?"

"I cannot be sure, but there is a chance of it."

"But if a servant subsequently took the thing to pieces, he or she may have found it?"

"Yes, that is possible."

"And kept quiet, if dishonest?"

"Yes."

"The emerald ring is undoubtedly mine, of course."

"That is certain."

"But you do not want me to go straight to this Mr. Peering and explain matters, because that may get you into trouble. Is that it?"

"No, not altogether. You could cover me, if you wished, in some way; and then I—I am too ill to care much. I only want to do the right thing. Not before or after did I stoop to theft, and God knows I have regretted this fall, for I have not had a happy hour since."

"Well, if you feel like that, what is to prevent me from going to claim my property?"

"Yes, that may be the best way, but I am not sure. The quarrel between my master and Mr. Peering was a money quarrel, and was followed by a lawsuit which Mr. Peering lost. He feels that he is wronged, and has a name of being a hard, grasping, and not too scrupulous man. He might put you off; it is possible he would ask you to call again; or he might choose for you not to be present when he examines the candlestick. Heaven forgive me if I do him an injustice, but I do fear, Mr. Shepherd, that he would not quietly hand you your jewel just for the asking of it. My idea, if I had been strong enough, was that, as I had put the ring where it may be still, it was for me to—to——" He broke off, convulsed by a paroxysm of coughing.

Shepherd waited, his forehead wrinkled with perplexed thought. When the other was quiet, he said:—

"Your idea was to bring the ring away secretly?"

"Yes, if I could have managed it for you."

"You really believe that the circumstances justify that?"

"It would be best, I feel."

"And what do you advise *me* to do?"

"I dare not say. But I do want you to have your property. If I had made the attempt it would have been either to-night or not later than to-morrow, for Mr. Peering is out of town, and will not return before a late hour to-morrow night. I could have done it. Entrance to the room from the garden is not hard. If you were to go, and anything unpleasant happened, you have my confession to the theft to assist you. But I dare not suggest such a way; I only mention it; and perhaps I shall shake off this bout, and—and——"

Another fit of coughing closed the sentence, and was followed by such exhaustion that Shepherd decided to put an end to the interview, at any rate for the present. He soon went back to his own room, having something more to think about than when he had left it. He started to light a cigarette, then discarded it for a well-packed pipe.

"One thing is crystal clear," said he to himself. "I can bear no grudge against that poor devil for stealing; for if he hadn't helped himself to the jewel and hidden it, old Grindon would have lost it in the general smash of his effects. As matters stand, I have a sporting chance of fingering what is assuredly my property. That I shall accept it is sure. I would sooner have a thousand pounds just now than ten thousand in years to come; very much sooner.

"Shall I wait until this chap Peering comes home, then go to him, look him straight in the eye, and demand my rights? No. I feel in my blood and bones that that would be a tactical error. I have taken a dislike to Peering. For one thing I don't care for his name, which smacks of spying and stealth. I have never known anyone bearing that name to be of a high and exalted character, although I admit that the name is new to me. Yes, I distrust the direct interview and demand. How easily he could put me off! How facile to look and say the ring is not there, unless I was present! And how can I insist on being present? I am a stranger to him, without any backing of finances or friends. Should he be tempted to take advantage of the situation, why, all the cards are his. And if he is the kind of fellow described to me, he will be tempted, especially as he will argue that he was wronged in a money lawsuit with his late friend—and mine.

"I may, instead of going to Peering, have private legal counsel. That will want paying for, and my assets are as last year's snows. And then how *can* even the law act without Peering being advised of the matter and having every chance to see if the jewel is in the place indicated? Directly he hears of the affair he will look—naturally, and his answer of 'Yes, it's there,' or 'No, it isn't,' must be accepted.

"Now the pith and centre of the whole thing is this: if Peering is allowed a private search of that blamed candlestick, and declares that the emerald ring is not in it, then, even though he may speak the truth, *I shall never absolutely believe him.*

"Good. It becomes certain that my one course of action is to help myself, if that be possible. Of course it may not be possible. It may be attended with too big a risk. Can a man steal his own property? The answer is in the negative. If he is found on enclosed premises after dark, he is up against something; but even then I should have a word to say for myself."

Shepherd knocked the ashes from his pipe. "In an hour or two I will make a tour of at least the outside of No. 22, Grandly Street."

SHEPHERD arrived on the scene at about eleven o'clock, and at once made the discovery that there is a difference, not slender, between looking at a house and effecting stealthy entrance. He had knocked about and been knocked a good deal in recent years, but the deadly thrill of the housebreaker's initial experiment had not been included in his adventures. And although he urged that this would not be a burglary in the first sense of the term, yet it was one in the second, and the idea tingled with excitement not quite healthy.

Three times he went away to think it over. The fact that the house was dark and—until the following night—untenanted encouraged him strongly. If he did not grasp this chance with both hands he would never get another like it. He returned for the fourth time determined on action.

Grandly Street, despite its name, was a street of small and unostentatious houses, with a side door for tradesmen. Shepherd slipped into this side passage, and became at once unseen from the street. The door was bolted on the farther side, but he leaped for the top of it and got over. His first act was to draw the bolts so as to be prepared for a possible swift flight. Passing along he came to a small garden with brick walls weighted with ivy. The back of the house was as dark as the front, but a bright light from a neighbouring window cut across it. Shepherd waited for this light to go out. It was helpful, for it gave him a shadowy view of the room he wanted. It was over a half-basement, with a wooden balcony in front that connected with the garden by a short flight of steps in a corner.

After Shepherd had waited for an hour, the light, which had made him nervous, suddenly went out. In less than a minute he was on the balcony and testing the fastenings of the long door-windows. Doubtless a cracksman of the out-and-out kind would speedily have discovered just what sort of fastenings held the glass door closed, but Shepherd only learnt that the catches seemed good, and the door itself shaky. He pushed hard—harder, and it gave at the strain, with a sharp crack. Alarmed, Shepherd retreated and hid again in the garden. Undisturbed silence of ten minutes'

He struck a match, and the first thing he saw was

duration restored his courage, and he returned. He stepped into the room. A sense of triumph made his heart beat strongly. If the candlesticks were here, on the mantel, he had won his game — by sheer and swift audacity. He struck a match, and the first thing he saw, as the tiny flare leaped up, was a man in an overcoat and soft felt hat, standing by an open door on the other side of the room, with an automatic pistol in his right hand. Lightning-like, two thoughts flickered through Shepherd's brain. The first was: "Peering—returned unexpectedly." The second: "He is only allowed to fire at my legs." The momentary comfort of this latter consideration—modified by a certain expectancy of his shinbones cracking—had not passed when he heard his captor remark quietly:—

"Don't blow out that match."

The words were delivered with the calm mastery of the man with the gun addressed to the man without it.

"You can use it to light this candle."

Keeping Shepherd covered, the other took one of the two brass candle-holders from the mantelpiece and placed it upon the table. Shepherd had just time to light the candle in it before the match burned his fingers.

"So I *did* hear a noise," said the owner of the house, as, intently watching his uninvited guest, he put the candlestick again upon the shelf. "You smashed in one of my doors; clumsily smashed it in. Presumably you believed the place to be empty. Am I right?"

"Yes," said Shepherd. He felt sweat on the palms of his hands, and he cursed himself for getting into such a mess. True, he had an explanation, but it seemed now like the thickness of a reed.

"And your luck was out. Remain perfectly still, and I shall not hurt you."

A telephone was on a corner of the mantel-

**a man with an automatic pistol in his right hand.**

piece, and the speaker took hold of the receiver.

"Please wait," said Shepherd earnestly. "Are you Mr. Peering?"

"And what the devil has that to do with you?"

"Because, impossible though it may appear, I can offer you some explanation of my being here, in this room, in such suspicious circumstances."

"You shall offer it to the police."

"Wait—wait! I entreat you not to be hasty," Shepherd rushed on. "I will mention a name familiar to us both—the name of Edmond Grindon."

With the telephone receiver loose in his hand, Peering—for Peering it was—glared at Shepherd frowningly. The latter continued, in stammering haste:—

"He was your friend once, and was mine always. In his will he left to me his emerald and diamond ring. I happen to know that it is here, concealed without your knowledge."

The frown deepened. "Indeed?" came the sceptical response. "In that case your name must be—but suppose *you* tell me?"

"Shepherd."

The frown faded, relaxed, disappeared. Peering put the receiver back in the clips. There was a pause in the discussion. With the solitary candle burning behind him he keenly regarded his visitor, on whose face the light fell.

Shepherd wiped his wet palms on the sides of his trousers.

"Keep those hands from your pockets!" flashed the menacing order. "You came here prepared with a series of lies, no doubt."

"Give me time and I will show you that I speak truth."

"Oh, yes; you will get time all right: probably about two years."

"I am not so sure about that," replied Shepherd, feeling better now that the telephone was abandoned. "I shall be able to

establish my identity and to show conclusively why I am here."

"Why you broke into my house, you mean?"

"I was wrong there; I see it now."

"But I am not going to argue this or any matter with you," said Peering sternly. "There was a man named Shepherd, and a certain jewel was left to him by a certain Edmond Grindon. You have got that part of the story right. But if you are the Shepherd mentioned, why did you not claim and receive the property?"

"Because it was missing even at the time the will was made. It had been stolen. If I wanted it, it was up to me to find it. You must know that perfectly well, Mr. Peering."

"Correct; you have made yourself acquainted with those facts also. Did I understand you to say that you had come *here* for the lost jewel?"

"Yes, I did say so."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"I mean that the man who stole it concealed it in this house."

"In this house?"

"In this room, Mr. Peering."

"In this room?"

"In one—but I see that you are not believing me."

"Not yet! Who told you this valuable is in my house?"

"The man who stole it."

"What a liar you are! Continue. Who is this man?"

"One of Mr. Grindon's servants. I have been abroad, and he found me out on my return. He acted under unusual temptation, and regretted it since. He is ill—dying, I think."

"I knew the late Mr. Grindon's servants. What was this one's name?"

"May I keep that in the dark—at least for the present?"

"Ah! I thought so. Your invention begins to fail."

"No, no! If you compel me to do so, I can take you straight from here to my informant."

"To your confederate, you mean. But enough of this. I have questioned you so far because your readiness of reply is a slight form of entertainment. You still affirm that the emerald is in my house?"

"In this room, possibly."

"I note the possibly. Very well, just where is it?"

Shepherd hesitated. The eyes boring into his, the voice which rang with hostility, and the character of hardness and covetousness which Bradley had given to this man, all warned him to be on his guard against bullying.

"I am waiting, but you must be quick," said the other, acidly. "Where is this emerald? Tell me."

IT was a horribly awkward moment. Shepherd felt that he had never known another like it, and he doubted if anyone else ever had, either.

He answered, somewhat desperately: "If it is where I was led to believe, I think I can put my hands on it, if you will allow me."

"If you put your hands on anything in this room I will put a crippling bullet into you, my innocent-seeming friend. If you have not been concocting a string of lies—as I feel you have—you can prove your statements, in part, if not altogether, by informing me where to look for the missing emerald. I will give you a few seconds longer. Come, my champion liar, where is it?"

Writhing inwardly, Shepherd temporized: "It was concealed some time ago, and may well have been discovered and secretly removed. The place is not a too-sure one. If it is not there after all, where do I stand?"

"Nevertheless, you must give yourself the chance. Where is it? Quick!"

The words, "In one of those two candlesticks," rose to Shepherd's lips, but at the critical instant he checked them. No, he would not, even in this extreme exigency, run a risk of being cheated out of his property. Once let his secret slip, and what was to prevent Peering ordering him out of the house, telling him that he was lucky not to be given in charge, and afterwards helping himself to the emerald ring? And he had a strong idea that that was what Peering would do.

Shepherd burst out, vehemently:—

"All right! Call the police, then. I'll stay quietly for them. I'll stick a short time of detention, for I can show that I am the Shepherd to whom Edmond Grindon bequeathed his jewel, and the police will examine my informant, the thief. I can be punished for breaking into this house, but the law will give me my property afterwards. Go ahead, curse you! I'm game."

Peering stared. He knew dogged determination when he saw it, and he saw it now. He fixed a steady look upon his visitor, and answered, after a silence:—

"I admit that it is possible that you are speaking truth. I do not say that you are, but that you may be. At the same time, nothing can excuse your monstrous conduct in forcing a way with violence into my house. I resent that in the strongest manner. If I had not returned to town a day earlier than I had arranged, you would

have had the run of my place. That is a most abominable thing."

Shepherd was silent. There are some matters for regret which an apologetic "Sorry" cannot atone for, and he rather fancied this was one of them.

"So that, although you may not be lying to me, you will scarcely escape a sentence for housebreaking if I choose to give you in charge."

"I have admitted that, Mr. Peering. Anything I can do——"

"Don't interrupt. Still assuming—merely assuming—that you are not a liar, I conclude that you would not have adopted so desperate a method of looking for your property unless you were in considerable money need."

"Well, yes, I am," Shepherd agreed, bluntly.

"Indeed, it is evident. In that case, your disappointment if the ring be not here—and it is unlikely that it should be—will be very keen. You will do wisely to cover yourself, therefore. I will pay you fifty pounds for this jewel, whether it exists or whether it does not; and in the circumstances such an offer is extremely generous."

A SHOCK of astonishment and chagrin raced through Shepherd's brain. He saw clearly that Peering now really believed his story, and that he intended to take advantage of his position and drive a hard bargain. Such a turn of the affair was most unexpected, and not without relief, for he now perceived that he was safe from being dragged off to a police cell. This relief, however, was followed by a feeling that the sum offered was an insult. Fifty pounds for a jewel worth a thousand! Intolerable! Then he compelled a calm reflection. He recognized that he had done very wrong in forcing a way at midnight into a man's house, and he ought not to mind paying for it, and be thankful for being allowed to pay for it. And then the statement of the jewel being hidden in the shaft of one of the candlesticks was—only a statement, so far. He had noticed in more than one furtive glance that the brass candle-holders were in a state of high polish. They must have been often handled by a servant. They may even have been sent away for re-lacquering. The emerald might so easily have been found and purloined. To refuse the offer would mean a loss of a sure fifty pounds; and it would mean his arrest; and as for getting his property afterwards, as he had boasted—why, that was a pretty nebulous proposition.

"I am treating you extremely well," went on Peering. "You must see that."

"No optician keeps spectacles strong enough," ran Shepherd's unexpressed reply. He said aloud: —

"This legacy means so much to me. You see what a risk—a most foolish one—I took to get it."

"Fifty pounds paid down now, on the spot, and for your word where I am to look for the jewel. You may put me on a wrong scent, but that I must chance, for I shall have to. Fifty pounds for the bare chance of finding a trinket that may have disappeared long ago."

"Perhaps I will take a hundred."

"Perhaps you won't."

"Or seventy-five, even."

"And your informant the thief may have lied to you. You are giving astonishing credence to his story."

"But the ring is worth a thousand!"

"The mere chance of finding it isn't!"

"You have me in your power, Mr. Peering."

"Which I am using mercifully; or, rather, I am not using my power at all; I am making you a fair business offer."

"I suppose you would require me to sign a paper yielding all right to the ring?"

"Just a line selling me your legacy, the emerald ring, for the sum of fifty pounds."

"A ghastly sacrifice."

"Yes, if you knew for certain that the trinket exists."

"All right," agreed Shepherd, groaningly.

"A bird in the hand, you know," said Peering, opening the drawer of a desk and producing a sheet of note-paper.

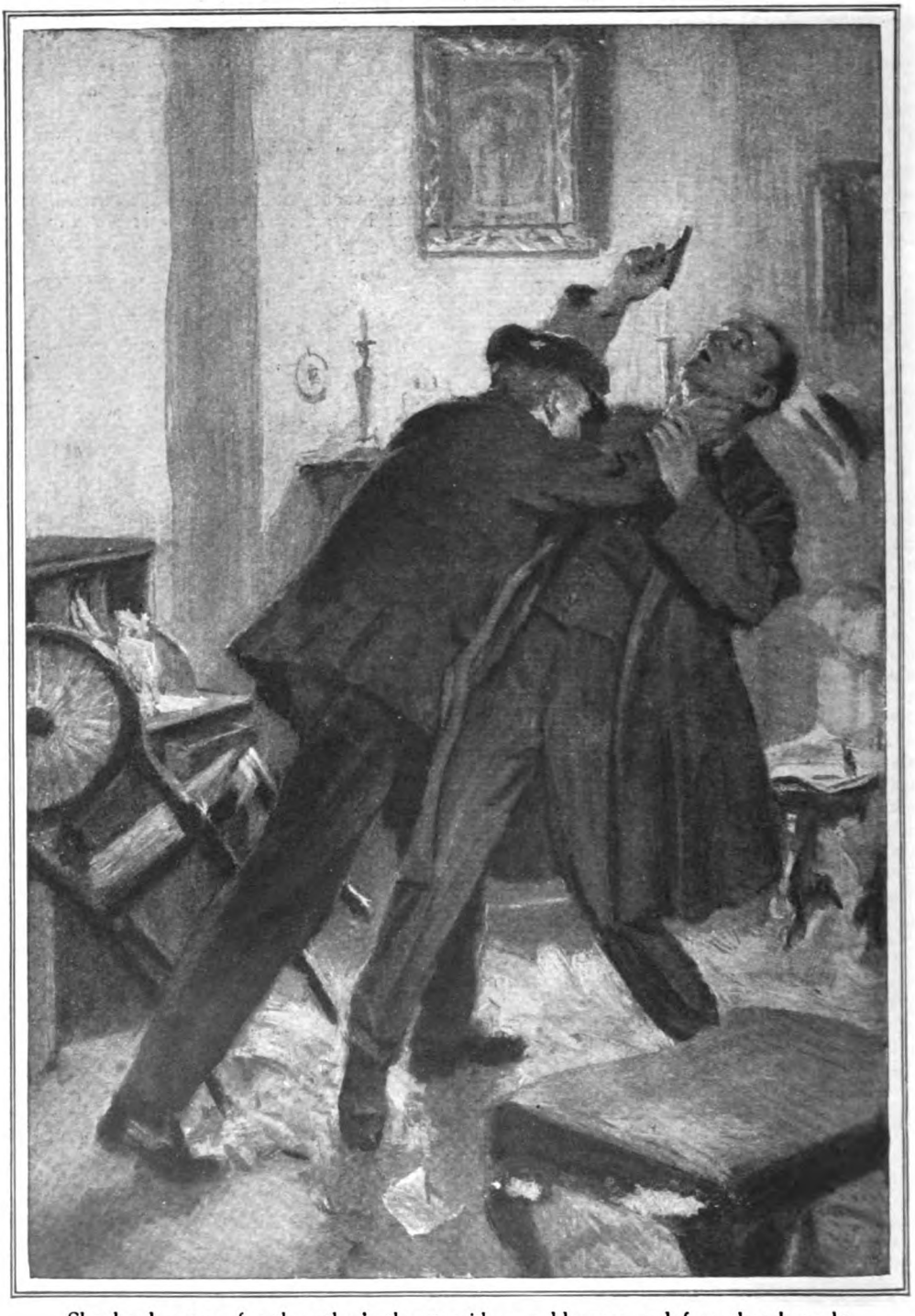
Shepherd seated himself and commenced to write. He had put down two words when he broke off to say:—

"Will you pay me the money before I tell you where to make your search? I am so completely in your power——"

"Exactly. I appreciate the point." As he spoke, Peering unlocked another drawer and took out a little roll of Treasury notes. He counted fifty of them and handed them to Shepherd, who put them in his pocket. "Finish your writing, and give me the paper at the same time that you communicate to me your secret. You will then be free to go, and afterwards doubtless indulge in a quiet chuckle that the jewel was not where you were informed it is."

Shepherd leaned again over his writing. He put down three words more, then paused, struck by a thought which ran: "Why did he not insist on getting the secret before paying for it? He might have compelled me to speak first."

As he questioned himself he darted a



Shepherd sprang for the other's throat with a suddenness and fury that brought both men with a crash to the floor.

stealthy and worried glance at Peering. The latter, during the interview, had been standing with his back to the one poor light in the room, that of the single candle on the mantelpiece; he had now turned a little, so that the flame revealed more of his face, which even then was partly hid by the turned-down brim of his soft felt hat. Shepherd had only that stealthy and fleeting glimpse, but it sent through his brain, with the swiftness and dazzle of lightning, a white-hot thought.

Peering and Bradley were the same!

SO intense, so electric was the idea, that a slight gasp left Shepherd's lips. Instantly he felt that the other's eyes were upon him. He bent over the paper; his hand started to put down something, but they were words without meaning. He was seeking time to think, and it must be strictly limited!

The dark room at his lodging where the sick man lay, in a corner, his face shielded from the smoky oil-lamp light. The racking cough which had deceived him: how very loud and racking it had been. The hectic flush; the damp and matted hair over the eyes; so easily done. Peering himself, all the time! There never was a Bradley. The "sick" man had sent him round to this house—Peering's own, and had swiftly followed, or gone first. A set trap. Peering had found out that Shepherd was back in London—mutual acquaintances had given him his information. Why had he taken that lodging in Small Porter Street for a week, taking the name of an imaginary Bradley, making an imaginary confession? The answer was daylight-clear to Shepherd. Peering must have discovered the lost emerald ring some time ago, and had been holding on to it, secretly. And he had sought to entrap the genuine owner into selling him a thousand-pound jewel for a beggarly fifty! He must have discovered it—Heaven knew where, or how; possibly Grindon really had left it behind on one of his visits to Peering's house, and it had become lost, and only recently found. Not now did Shepherd go into that matter!

His nerves tingled; his blood raced. What was he going to do? Ah, he would know what to do; but was he sure? For he had to be dead sure—first.

He drew a deep breath. He laid aside the pen and looked at the paper, at the meaningless jumble of words he had written. He rose. He handed the paper to Peering, and with the movement he put his face close to the other's and darted upon him a glance penetrating, questioning, intense. Peering drew back; into his eyes leaped an expression which satisfied Shepherd perfectly, and he sprang for the other's throat with a suddenness and fury that brought both men with a crash to the floor.

With a pair of knees upon his chest, and a pair of hands clutching his windpipe, Peering felt his senses going and the dark coming. He gurgled unintelligibly, kicking the carpet with his heels.

"My emerald ring—where is it?" snarled Shepherd. "Your game's up, Peering—liar!"

"I swear I haven't—I—I'm dying!" gasped Peering.

"Save yourself, then! Quick! My emerald!"

"In—in—in the drawer where—where the fifty pounds——"

Shepherd lifted him up by the collar by sheer strength, dragged him to the desk, and with his disengaged hand groped for his property. He found it speedily, reposing in a little green plush case. He dropped it into his pocket, flung the half-insensible Peering upon the hearthrug, and retreated with the utmost coolness by the way he had come.

In Grandly Street he paused to light a cigarette. How good it tasted! He tapped a side pocket where slightly bulged a green plush case, with a thousand pounds inside it.

"Thanks, Grindon, thanks!" he said.

# The Inferiority Complex of Old Sippy

By

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

I CHECKED the man with one of my glances. I was astounded and shocked.

"Not another word, Jeeves," I said. "You have gone too far. Hats, yes. Socks, yes. Coats, trousers, shirts, ties, and spats, absolutely. On all these things I defer to your judgment. But when it comes to vases, no."

"Very good, sir."

"You say that this vase is not in harmony with the appointments of the room—whatever that means, if anything. I deny this, Jeeves, *in toto*. I like this vase. I call it decorative, striking, and, all in all, an exceedingly good fifteen bob's worth."

"Very good, sir."

"That's that, then. If anybody rings up, I shall be closeted during the next hour with Mr. Sipperley at the offices of *The Mayfair Gazette*."

I beetled off with a fairish amount of restrained hauteur, for I was displeased with the man. On the previous afternoon, while sauntering along the Strand, I had found myself wedged into one of those sort of alcove places where fellows with voices like fog-horns stand all day selling things by auction. And, though I was still vague as to how exactly it had happened, I had somehow become the possessor of a large china vase with crimson dragons on it. And not only dragons, but birds, dogs, snakes, and a thing that looked like a leopard. This menagerie was now stationed on a bracket over the door of my sitting-room.

I liked the thing. It was bright and cheerful. It caught the eye. And that was why, when Jeeves, wincing a bit, had weighed in with some perfectly gratuitous art-criticism, I ticked him off with no little vim. *Ne sutor ultra* whatever-it-is, I would have said to him, if I'd thought of it. I mean to say, where does a valet get off, censoring vases? Does it fall within his province to knock the young master's chinaware? Absolutely not, and so I told him.

I WAS still pretty heartily hipped when I reached the office of *The Mayfair Gazette*, and it would have been a relief to my feelings to have decanted my troubles on to old Sippy, who, being a very, very dear old pal of mine, would no doubt have understood and sympathized. But when the office-boy had slipped me through into the inner cubbyhole where the old lad performed his editorial duties, he seemed so preoccupied that I hadn't the heart.

All these editor blokes, I understand, get pretty careworn after they've been at the job for awhile. Six months before, Sippy had been a cheery cove, full of happy laughter; but at that time he was what they call a free-lance, bunging in a short story here and a set of verses there and generally enjoying himself. Ever since he had become editor of this rag, I had sensed a change, so to speak.

To-day he looked more editorial than ever; so, shelving my own worries for the nonce, I endeavoured to cheer him up by telling him how much I had enjoyed his last issue. As a matter of fact, I hadn't read it, but we Woosters do not shrink from subterfuge when it is a question of bracing up a buddy.

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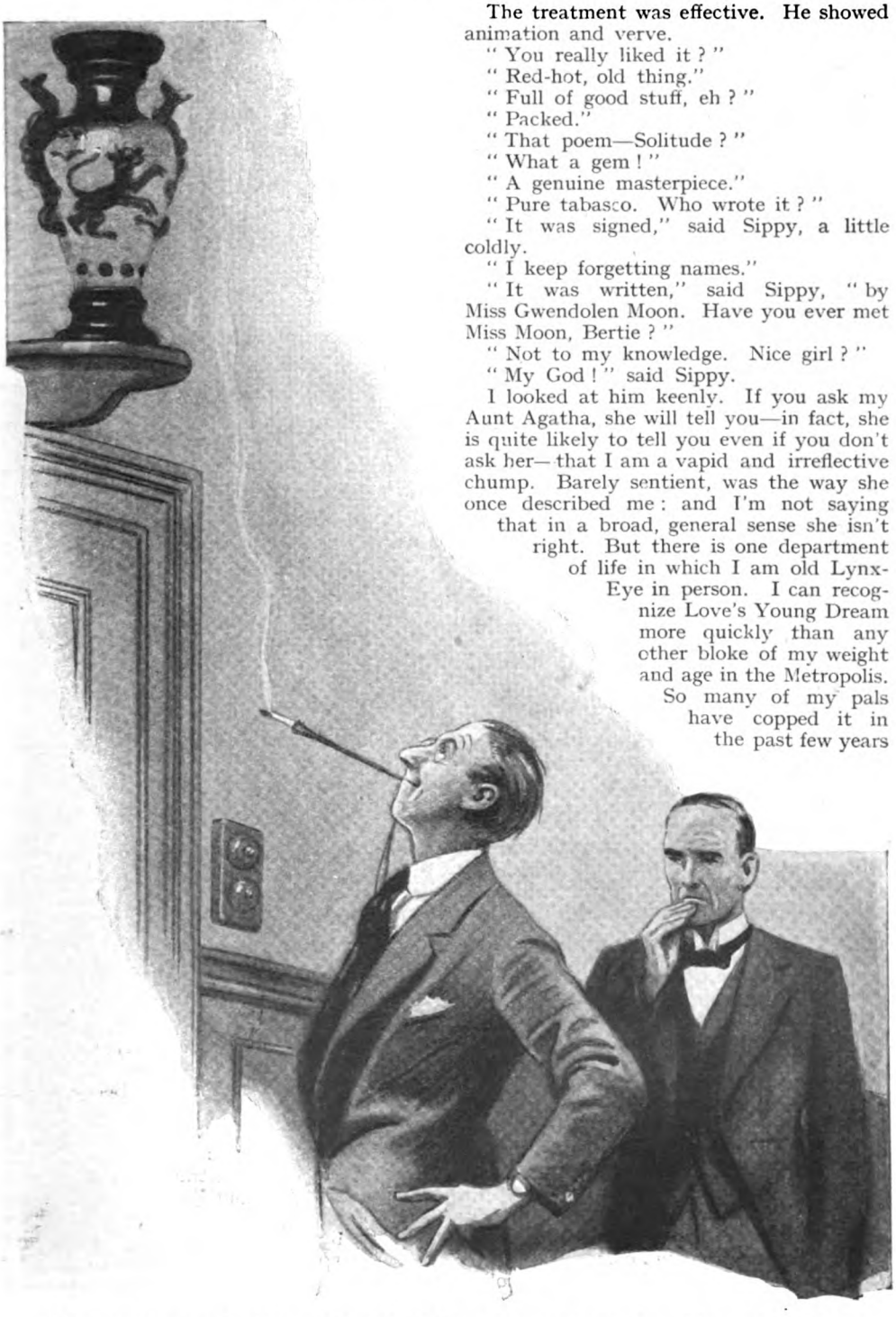


The treatment was effective. He showed animation and verve.

"You really liked it?"

"Red-hot, old thing."

"Full of good stuff, eh?"

"Packed."

"That poem—Solitude?"

"What a gem!"

"A genuine masterpiece."

"Pure tabasco. Who wrote it?"

"It was signed," said Sippy, a little coldly.

"I keep forgetting names."

"It was written," said Sippy, "by Miss Gwendolen Moon. Have you ever met Miss Moon, Bertie?"

"Not to my knowledge. Nice girl?"

"My God!" said Sippy.

I looked at him keenly. If you ask my Aunt Agatha, she will tell you—in fact, she is quite likely to tell you even if you don't ask her—that I am a vapid and irreflective chump. Barely sentient, was the way she once described me: and I'm not saying that in a broad, general sense she isn't right. But there is one department of life in which I am old Lynx-Eye in person. I can recognize Love's Young Dream more quickly than any other bloke of my weight and age in the Metropolis. So many of my pals have copped it in the past few years

**"Not another word, Jeeves," I said. "You have gone too far. Hats, yes. Socks, yes. On these things I defer to your judgment. But when it comes to vases, no."**

that now I can spot it a mile off on a foggy day. Sippy was leaning back in his chair, chewing a piece of indiarubber, with a far-off look in his eyes, and I formed my diagnosis instantly.

"Tell me all, laddie," I said.

"Bertie, I love her."

"Stout fellow! Have you told her so?"

"How can I?"

"I don't see why not. Quite easy to bring into the general conversation."

Sippy groaned hollowly.

"Do you know what it is, Bertie, to feel the humility of a worm?"

"Rather! I do sometimes with Jeeves. But to-day he went too far. You will scarcely credit it, old man, but he had the crust to criticize a vase which——"

"She is so far above me."

"Tall girl?"

"Spiritually. She is all soul. And what am I? Earthy."

"Would you say that?"

"I would. Have you forgotten that a year ago I did thirty days without the option for punching a policeman in the stomach on Boat-Race night?"

"But you were whiffled at the time."

"Exactly. What right has an inebriated jail-bird to aspire to a goddess?"

My heart bled for the poor old chap.

"Aren't you exaggerating things a trifle, old lad?" I said. "Everybody who has had a gentle upbringing gets a bit sozzled on Boat-Race night, and the better element nearly always have trouble with the gendarmes."

He shook his head.

"It's no good, Bertie. You mean well, but words are useless. No, I can but worship from afar. When I am in her presence a strange dumbness comes over me. My tongue seems to get entangled with my tonsils. I could no more muster up the nerve to propose to her than—— Come in!" he shouted.

FOR, just as he was beginning to go nicely and display a bit of eloquence, a knock had sounded on the door. In fact, not so much a knock as a bang—or even a slosh. And there now entered a large, important-looking bird with penetrating eyes, a Roman nose, and high cheek-bones. Authoritative. That's the word I want. I didn't like his collar, and Jeeves would have had a thing or two to say about the sit of his trousers; but, nevertheless, he was authoritative. There was something compelling about the man. He looked like a traffic-policeman.

"Ah, Sipperley!" he said.

Old Sippy displayed a good deal of agitation. He had leaped from his chair, and was now standing in a constrained attitude, with a sort of pop-eyed expression on his face.

"Pray be seated, Sipperley," said the cove. He took no notice of me. After one keen glance and a brief waggle of the nose in my direction, he had washed Bertram out of his life. "I have brought you another little offering—ha! Look it over at your leisure, my dear fellow."

"Yes, sir," said Sippy.

"I think you will enjoy it. But there is just one thing. I should be glad, Sipperley, if you would give it a leetle better display, a rather more prominent position in the paper than you accorded to my 'Landmarks of Old Tuscany.' I am quite aware that in a weekly journal space is a desideratum, but one does not like one's efforts to be—I can only say pushed away in a back corner among advertisements of bespoke tailors and places of amusement." He paused, and a nasty gleam came into his eyes. "You will bear this in mind, Sipperley?"

"Yes, sir," said Sippy.

"I am greatly obliged, my dear fellow," said the cove, becoming genial again. "You must forgive my mentioning it. I would be the last person to attempt to dictate the—ha!—editorial policy, but—— Well, good afternoon, Sipperley. I will call for your decision at three o'clock to-morrow."

He withdrew, leaving a gap in the atmosphere about ten feet by six. When this had closed in, I sat up.

"What was that?" I said.

I was startled to observe poor old Sippy apparently go off his onion. He raised his hands over his head, clutched his hair, wrenched it about for a while, kicked a table with great violence, and then flung himself into his chair.

"Curse him!" said Sippy. "May he tread on a banana-skin on his way to chapel and sprain both ankles!"

"Who was he?"

"May he get frog-in-the-throat and be unable to deliver the end-of-term sermon!"

"Yes, but who was he?"

"My old head master, Bertie," said Sippy.

"Yes, but, my dear old soul——"

"Head master of my old school." He gazed at me in a distraught sort of way. "Good Lord! Can't you understand the position?"

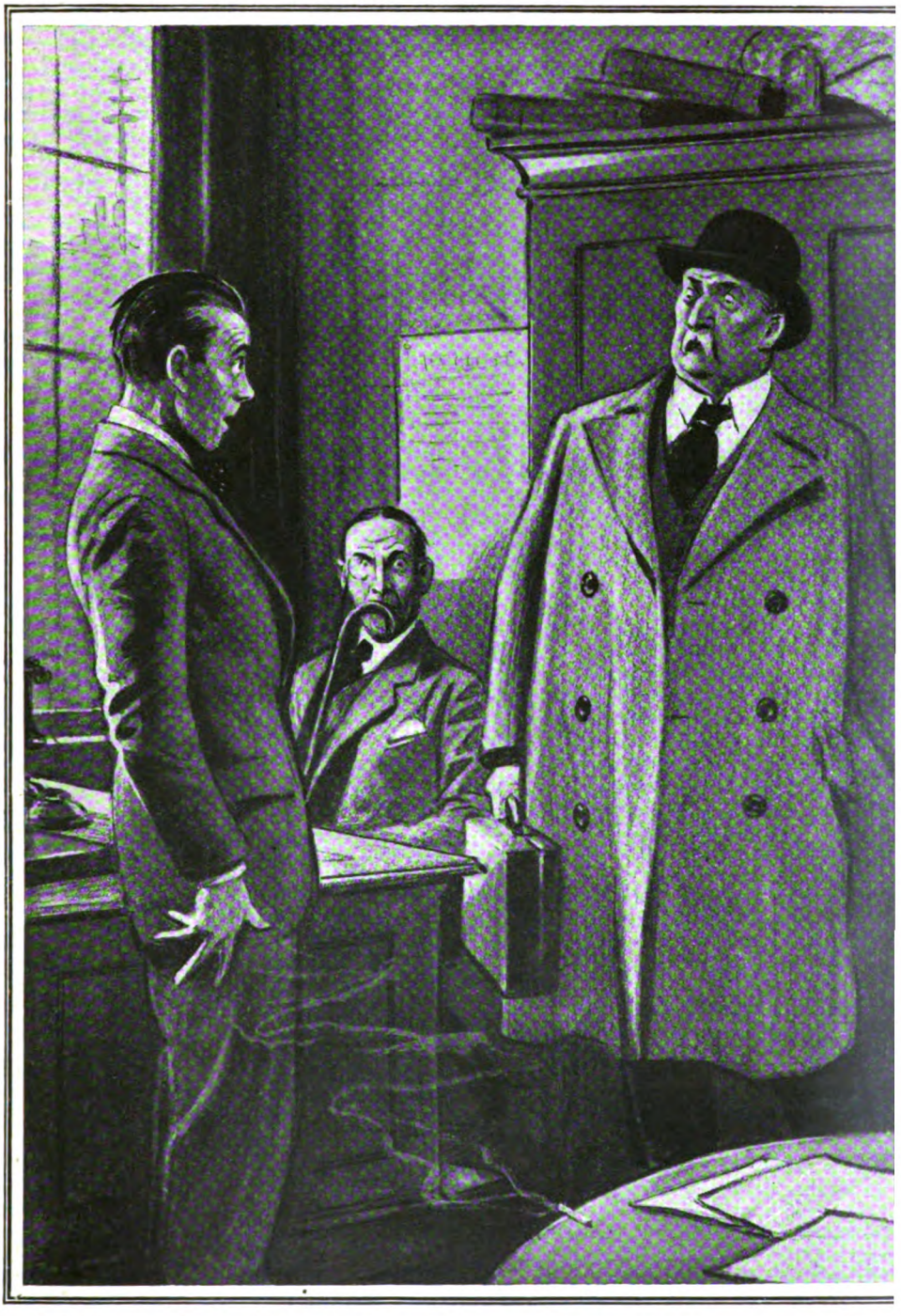
"Not by a jugful, laddie."

Sippy sprang from his chair and took a turn or two up and down the carpet.

"How do you feel," he said, "when you meet the head master of your old school?"

"I never do. He's dead."

"Well, I'll tell you how I feel. I feel as if



Old Sippy had leaped from his chair, and was now standing in a constrained attitude, with a sort of pop-eyed expression on his face.

I were in the Lower Fourth again, and had been sent up by my form-master for creating a disturbance in school. That happened once, Bertie, and the memory still lingers. I can recall as if it were yesterday knocking at old Waterbury's door and hearing him say, 'Come in!' like a lion roaring at an early Christian, and going in and shuffling my feet on the mat and him looking at me and me explaining—and then, after what seemed a lifetime, bending over and receiving six of the juiciest on the old spot with a cane that bit like an adder. And whenever he comes into my office now the old wound begins to trouble me, and I just say, 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' and feel like a kid of fourteen."

I began to grasp the posish. The whole trouble with these fellows like Sippy, who go in for writing, is that they develop the artistic temperament, and you never know when it is going to break out.

"He comes in here with his pockets full of articles on 'The Old School Cloisters' and 'Some Little-Known Aspects of Tacitus,' and muck like that, and I haven't the nerve to refuse them. And this is supposed to be a paper devoted to the lighter interests of Society."

"You must be firm, Sippy. Firm, old thing."

"How can I, when the sight of him makes me feel like a piece of chewed blotting-paper? When he looks at me over that nose, my *morale* goes blue at the roots and I am back at school again. It's persecution, Bertie. And the next thing that'll happen is that my proprietor will spot one of those articles, assume with perfect justice that, if I can print that sort of thing, I must be going off my chump, and fire me."

I pondered. It was a tough problem.

"How would it be—— ?" I said.

"That's no good."

"Only a suggestion, laddie," I said.

"JEEVES," I said, when I got home, "surge round!"

"Sir?"

"Burnish the old bean. I have a case that calls for one of your best efforts. Have you ever heard of a Miss Gwendolen Moon?"

"Authoress of 'Autumn Leaves,' 'Twas on an English June,' and other works. Yes, sir."

"Great Scott, Jeeves, you seem to know everything."

"Thank you very much, sir."

"Well, Mr. Sipperley is in love with Miss Moon."

"Yes, sir."

"But fears to speak."

"It is often the way, sir."

"Deeming himself unworthy."

"Precisely, sir,"

"Right! But that is not all. Tuck that away in a corner of the mind, Jeeves, and absorb the rest of the facts. Mr. Sipperley, as you are aware, is the editor of a weekly paper devoted to the interests of the lighter Society. And now the head master of his old school has started calling at the office and unloading on him junk entirely unsuited to the lighter Society. All clear?"

"I follow you perfectly, sir."

"And this drip Mr. Sipperley is compelled to publish, much against his own wishes, purely because he lacks the nerve to tell the man to go to blazes. The whole trouble being, Jeeves, that he has got one of those things that fellows do get—it's on the tip of my tongue."

"An inferiority complex, sir?"

"Exactly. An inferiority complex. I have one myself with regard to my Aunt Agatha. You know me, Jeeves. You know that if it were a question of volunteers to man the lifeboat, I would spring to the task. If anyone said, 'Don't go down the coal-mine, daddy,' it would have not the slightest effect on my resolution——"

"Undoubtedly, sir."

"And yet—and this is where I want you to follow me very closely, Jeeves—when I hear that my Aunt Agatha is out with her hatchet and moving in my direction, I run like a rabbit. Why? Because she gives me an inferiority complex. And so it is with Mr. Sipperley. He would, if called upon, mount the deadly breach, and do it without a tremor; but he cannot bring himself to propose to Miss Moon, and he cannot kick his old head master in the stomach and tell him to take his beastly essays on 'The Old School Cloisters' elsewhere, because he has an inferiority complex. So what about it, Jeeves?"

"I fear I have no plan which I could advance with any confidence on the spur of the moment, sir."

"You want time to think, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take it, Jeeves, take it. You may feel brainier after a night's sleep. What is it Shakespeare calls sleep, Jeeves?"

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, sir."

"Exactly. Well, there you are, then."

YOU know, there's nothing like sleeping on a thing. Scarcely had I woken up next morning when I discovered that, while I slept, I had got the whole binge neatly into order and worked out a plan Foch might have been proud of. I rang the bell for Jeeves to bring me my tea.

I rang again. But it must have been five

minutes before the man showed up with the steaming.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, when I reproached him. "I did not hear the bell. I was in the sitting-room, sir."

"Ah?" I said, sucking down a spot of the mixture. "Doing this and that, no doubt?"

"Dusting your new vase, sir."

My heart warmed to the fellow. If there's one person I like, it's the chap who is not too proud to admit it when he's in the wrong. No actual statement to that effect had passed his lips, of course, but we Woosters can read between the lines. I could see that he was learning to love the vase.

"How does it look?"

"Yes, sir."

A bit cryptic, but I let it go.

"Jeeves," I said.

"Sir?"

"That matter we were in conference about yestereen."

"The matter of Mr. Sipperley, sir?"

"Precisely. Don't worry yourself any further. Stop the brain working. I shall not require your services. I have found the solution. It came on me like a flash."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Just like a flash. In a matter of this kind, Jeeves, the first thing to do is to study —what's the word I want?"

"I could not say, sir."

"Quite a common word—though long."

"Psychology, sir?"

"The exact noun. It is a noun?"

"Yes, sir."

"Spoken like a man! Well, Jeeves, direct your attention to the psychology of old Sippy. Mr. Sipperley, if you follow me, is in the position of a man from whose eyes the scales have not fallen. The task that faced me, Jeeves, was to discover some scheme which would cause those scales to fall. You get me?"

"Not entirely, sir."

"Well, what I'm driving at is this. At present this head master bloke, this Waterbury, is trampling all over Mr. Sipperley because he is hedged about with dignity, if you understand what I mean. Years have passed; Mr. Sipperley now shaves daily and is in an important editorial position; but he can never forget that this bird once gave him six of the juiciest. Result: an inferiority complex. The only way to remove that complex, Jeeves, is to arrange that Mr. Sipperley shall see this Waterbury in a thoroughly undignified position. This done, the scales will fall from his eyes. You must see that for yourself, Jeeves. Take your own case. No doubt there are a number of your friends and relations who look up to you and respect you greatly. But suppose one night they were to see you, in an advanced state of intoxication, dancing the Charleston in your underwear in the middle of Piccadilly Circus?"

"The contingency is remote, sir."

"Ah, but suppose they did. The scales would fall from their eyes, what?"

"Very possibly, sir."

"TAKE another case. Do you remember a year or so ago the occasion when my Aunt Agatha accused the maid at that French hotel of pinching her pearls, only to discover that they were still in her drawer?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whereupon she looked the most priceless ass. You'll admit that."

"Certainly I have seen Mrs. Spenser appear to greater advantage than at that moment, sir."

"Exactly. Now follow me like a leopard. Observing my Aunt Agatha in her downfall; watching her turn bright mauve and listening to her being told off in liquid French by a whiskered hotel proprietor without coming back with so much as a single lift of the eyebrows, I felt as if the scales had fallen from my eyes. For the first time in my life, Jeeves, the awe with which this woman had inspired me from childhood's days left me. It came back later, I'll admit; but at the moment I saw my Aunt Agatha for what she was—not, as I had long imagined, a sort of man-eating fish at the very mention of whose name strong men quivered like aspens, but a poor goop who had just dropped a very serious brick. At that moment, Jeeves, I could have told her precisely where she got off; and only a too chivalrous regard for the sex kept me from doing so. You won't dispute that?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, my firm conviction is that the scales will fall from Mr. Sipperley's eyes when he sees this Waterbury, this old head master, stagger into his office covered from head to foot with flour."

"Flour, sir?"

"Flour, Jeeves."

"But why should he pursue such a course, sir?"

"Because he won't be able to help it. The stuff will be balanced on top of the door, and the force of gravity will do the rest. I propose to set a booby-trap for this Waterbury, Jeeves."

"Really, sir, I would scarcely advocate——"

I raised my hand.

"Peace, Jeeves! There is more to come.

You have not forgotten that Mr. Sipperley loves Miss Gwendolen Moon, but fears to speak. I bet you'd forgotten that."

"No, sir."

"Well, then, my belief is that, once he finds he has lost his awe of this Waterbury, he will be so supremely braced that there will be no holding him. He will rush right off and bung his heart at her feet, Jeeves."

"Well, sir——"

"Jeeves," I said, a little severely, "whenever I suggest a plan or scheme or course of action, you are too apt to say 'Well, sir,' in a nasty tone of voice. I do not like it, and it is a habit you should check. The plan or scheme or course of action which I have outlined contains no flaw. If it does, I should like to hear it."

"Well, sir——"

"Jeeves!"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I was about to remark that, in my opinion, you are approaching Mr. Sipperley's problems in the wrong order."

"How do you mean, the wrong order?"

"Well, I fancy, sir, that better results would be obtained by first inducing Mr. Sipperley to offer marriage to Miss Moon. In the event of the young lady proving agreeable, I think that Mr. Sipperley would be in such an elevated frame of mind that he would have no difficulty in asserting himself with Mr. Waterbury."

"Ah, but you are then stymied by the question—How is he to be induced?"

"It had occurred to me, sir, that, as Miss Moon is a poetess and of a romantic nature, it might have weight with her if she heard that Mr. Sipperley had met with a serious injury and was mentioning her name."

"Calling for her brokenly, you mean?"

"Calling for her, as you say, sir, brokenly."

I sat up in bed, and pointed at him rather coldly with the teaspoon.

"Jeeves," I said, "I would be the last man to accuse you of dithering, but this is not like you. It is not the old form, Jeeves. You are losing your grip. It might be years before Mr. Sipperley had a serious injury."

"There is that to be considered, sir."

"I cannot believe that it is you, Jeeves, who are meekly suggesting that we should suspend all activities in this matter year after year, on the chance that some day Mr. Sipperley may fall under a truck or something. No! The programme will be as I have sketched it out, Jeeves. After breakfast, kindly step out and purchase about a pound and a half of the best flour. The rest you may leave to me."

"Very good, sir."

THE first thing you need in matters of this kind, as every general knows, is a thorough knowledge of the terrain. Not know the terrain, and where are you? Look at Napoleon and that sunken road at Waterloo. Silly ass!

I had a thorough knowledge of the terrain of Sippy's office, and it ran as follows. I won't draw a plan, because my experience is that, when you're reading one of those detective stories and come to the bit where the author draws a plan of the Manor, showing room where body was found, stairs leading to passage-way, and all the rest of it, one just skips. I'll simply explain in a few brief words.

The offices of *The Mayfair Gazette* were on the first floor of a mouldy old building off Covent Garden. You went in at a front door and ahead of you was a passage leading to the premises of Bellamy Bros., dealers in seeds and garden produce. Ignoring the Bros. Bellamy, you proceeded upstairs and found two doors opposite you. One, marked Private, opened into Sippy's editorial sanctum. The other—sub-title: Inquiries—shot you into a small room where an office-boy sat, eating peppermints and reading the adventures of Tarzan. If you got past the office-boy, you went through another door and there you were in Sippy's room, just as if you had nipped through the door marked Private. Perfectly simple.

It was over the door marked Inquiries that I proposed to suspend the flour.

Now, setting a booby-trap for a respectable citizen like a head master (even of an inferior school to your own) is not a matter to be approached lightly and without careful preparation. I don't suppose I've ever selected a lunch with more thought than I did that day. And after a nicely-balanced meal, preceded by a couple of dry Martinis, washed down with a half bot. of a nice light, dry champagne, and followed by a spot of brandy, I could have set a booby-trap for a bishop.

The only really difficult part of the campaign was to get rid of the office-boy; for naturally you don't want witnesses when you're shoving bags of flour on doors. Fortunately, every man has his price, and it wasn't long before I contrived to persuade the lad that there was sickness at home and he was needed at Cricklewood. This done, I mounted a chair and got to work.

IT was many, many years since I had tackled this kind of job, but the old skill came back as good as ever. Having got the bag so nicely poised that a touch on the door would do all that was necessary, I skipped down from my chair, popped off through Sippy's room, and went down into

**"Jeeves," I said, a little severely, "whenever I suggest a plan or scheme or course of action, you are too apt to say 'Well, sir,' in a nasty tone of voice. I do not like it."**

the street. Sippy had not shown up yet, which was all to the good, but I knew he usually trickled in at about five to three. I hung about in the street, and presently round the corner came the bloke Waterbury. He went in at the front door, and I started off for a short stroll. It was no part of my policy to be in the offing when things began to happen.

IT seemed to me that, allowing for wind and weather, the scales should have fallen from old Sippy's eyes by about three-fifteen, Greenwich mean time; so, having prowled around Covent Garden among the spuds and cabbages for twenty minutes or so, I retraced my steps and pushed up the stairs. I went in at the door marked Private, fully expecting to see old Sippy, and conceive of my astonishment and chagrin when I found on entering only the bloke Waterbury. He was seated at Sippy's desk, reading a paper, as if the place belonged to him.

And, moreover, there was of flour on his person not a trace.

"Great Scott!" I said.

It was a case of the sunken road, after all. But, dash it, how could I have been expected to take into consideration the possibility that this cove, head master though he was, would have had the cold nerve to walk into Sippy's private office instead of pushing in a normal and orderly manner through the public door?

He raised the nose, and focused me over it.

"Yes?"

"I was looking for old Sippy."

"Mr. Sipperley has not yet arrived."

He spoke with a good deal of pique, seeming to be a man who was not used to being kept waiting.

"Well, how is everything?" I said, to ease things along.

He had started reading again. He looked up as if he found me pretty superfluous.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, nothing."

"You spoke."

"I only said 'How is everything?' don't you know."

"How is what?"

"Everything."

"I fail to understand you."

"Let it go," I said.

I found a certain difficulty in boosting along the chit-chat. He was not a responsive cove.

"Nice day," I said.

"Quite."

"But they say the crops need rain."

He had buried himself in his paper once more, and seemed peeved this time on being lugged to the surface.

"What?"

"The crops."

"The crops?"

"Crops."

"What crops?"

"Oh, just crops."

He laid down his paper.

"You appear to be desirous of giving me some information about crops. What is it?"

"I hear they need rain."

"Indeed?"

That concluded the small-talk. He went on reading, and I found a chair and sat down and sucked the handle of my stick. And so the long day wore on.

IT may have been some two hours later, or it may have been about five minutes, when there became audible in the passage outside a strange wailing sound, as of some creature in pain. The bloke Waterbury looked up. I looked up.

The wailing came closer. It came into the room. It was Sippy, singing.

"—— I love you. That's all that I can say. I love you, I lo-o-ve you. The same old——"

He suspended the chant, not too soon for me.

"Oh, hullo!" he said.

I was amazed. The last time I had seen old Sippy, you must remember, he had had all the appearance of a man who didn't know it was loaded. Haggard. Drawn face. Circles under the eyes. All that sort of thing. And now, not much more than twenty-four hours later, he was simply radiant. His eyes sparkled. His mobile lips were curved in a happy smile. He looked as if he had been taking as much as will cover a sixpence every morning before breakfast for years.

"Hullo, Bertie!" he said. "Hullo, Waterbury! Sorry I'm late."

The bloke Waterbury seemed by no means pleased at this cordial form of address. He froze visibly.

"You are exceedingly late. I may mention that I have been waiting for upwards of half an hour, and my time is not without its value."

"Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry," said Sippy, jovially. "You wanted to see me about that article on the Elizabethan dramatists you left here yesterday, didn't you? Well, I've read it, and I'm sorry to say, Waterbury, that it's N.G."

"I beg your pardon?"

"No earthly use to us. Quite the wrong sort of stuff. This paper is supposed to be all light Society interest. What the *débutante* will wear for Goodwood, you know, and I saw Lady Betty Bootle in the Park yesterday—she is, of course, the sister-in-law of the Duchess of Peebles, 'Cuckoo' to her intimates—all that kind of rot. My readers don't want stuff about Elizabethan dramatists."

"Sipperley——!"

Old Sippy reached out and patted him in a paternal manner on the back.

"Now listen, Waterbury," he said, kindly. "You know as well as I do that I hate to turn down an old pal. But I have my duty to the paper. Still, don't be discouraged. Keep trying, and you'll do fine. There is a lot of promise in your stuff, but you want to study your market. Keep your eyes open and see what editors need. Now, just as a suggestion, why not have a dash at a light, breezy article on pet dogs. You've probably noticed that the pug, once so fashionable, has been superseded by the Peke, the griffon, and the Sealyham. Work on that line and——"

The bloke Waterbury navigated towards the door.

"I have no desire to work on that line, as you put it," he said, stiffly. "If you do not require my paper on the Elizabethan dramatists I shall no doubt be able to find another editor whose tastes are more in accord with my work."

"The right spirit absolutely, Waterbury," said Sippy, cordially. "Never give in. Perseverance brings home the gravy. If you get an article accepted, send another article to that editor. If you get an article refused, send that article to

I found a certain difficulty in boosting along the chit-chat. He was not a responsive cove.

another editor. Carry on, Waterbury. I shall watch your future progress with considerable interest."

"Thank you," said the bloke Waterbury, bitterly. "This expert advice should prove most useful."

He biffed off, banging the door behind him, and I turned to Sippy, who was swerving about the room like an exuberant snipe.

"Sippy——"

"Eh? What? Can't stop, Bertie, can't stop. Only looked in to tell you the news. I'm taking Gwendolen to tea at the Carlton. I'm the happiest man in the world, Bertie. Engaged, you know. Betrothed. All washed up and signed on the dotted line. Wedding, June the first, at eleven a.m. sharp, at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. Presents should be delivered before the end of May."

"But, Sippy! Come to roost for a second. How did this happen? I thought——"

"Well, it's a long story. Much too long to tell you now. Ask Jeeves. He came along with me, and is waiting outside. But when I found her bending over me, weeping, I knew that a word from me was all that was needed. I took her little hand in mine and——"

"What do you mean, bending over you? Where?"

"In your sitting-room."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why was she bending over you?"

"Because I was on the floor, ass. Naturally a girl would bend over a fellow who was on the floor. Good-bye, Bertie. I must rush."

He was out of the room before I knew he had started. I followed at a high rate of speed, but he was down the stairs before I reached the passage. I legged it after him, but when I got into the street it was empty.

No, not absolutely empty. Jeeves was standing on the pavement, gazing dreamily at a brussels sprout which lay in the fairway.

"Mr. Sipperley has this moment gone, sir," he said, as I came charging out.

I halted and mopped the brow.

"Jeeves," I said, "what has been happening?"

"As far as Mr. Sipperley's romance is concerned, sir, all, I am happy to report, is well. He and Miss Moon have arrived at a satisfactory settlement."

"I know. They're engaged. But how did it happen?"

"I took the liberty of telephoning to Mr. Sipperley in your name, asking him to come immediately to the flat, sir."

"Oh, that's how he came to be at the flat? Well?"

"I then took the liberty of telephoning to Miss Moon and informing her that Mr. Sipperley had met with a nasty accident. As I anticipated, the young lady was strongly moved and announced her intention of coming to see Mr. Sipperley immediately. When she arrived, it required only a few moments to arrange the matter. It seems that Miss Moon has long loved Mr. Sipperley, sir, and——"

"I should have thought that, when she turned up and found he hadn't had a nasty accident, she would have been thoroughly pipped at being fooled."

"Mr. Sipperley had had a nasty accident, sir."

"He had?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rummy coincidence. I mean, after what you were saying this morning."

"Not altogether, sir. Before telephoning to Miss Moon, I took the further liberty of striking Mr. Sipperley a sharp blow on the head with one of your golf-clubs, which was fortunately lying in a corner of the room. The putter, I believe, sir. If you recollect, you were practising with it this morning before you left."

I gaped at the blighter. I had always known Jeeves for a man of infinite sagacity, sound beyond belief on any question of ties or spats; but never before had I suspected him capable of strong-arm work like this. It seemed to open up an entirely new aspect of the fellow. I can't put it better than by saying that, as I gazed at him, the scales seemed to fall from my eyes.

"Good heavens, Jeeves!"

"I did it with the utmost regret, sir. It appeared to me the only course."

"But look here, Jeeves. I don't get this. Wasn't Mr. Sipperley pretty shirty when he came to and found that you had been soaking him with putters?"

"He was not aware that I had done so, sir. I took the precaution of waiting until his back was momentarily turned."

"But how did you explain the bump on his head?"

"I informed him that your new vase had fallen on him, sir."

"Why on earth would he believe that? The vase would have been smashed."

"The vase was smashed, sir."

"What!"

"In order to achieve verisimilitude, I was reluctantly compelled to break it, sir. And in my excitement, sir, I am sorry to say I broke it beyond repair."

I drew myself up.

"Jeeves!" I said.

"Pardon me, sir, but would it not be wiser to wear a hat? There is a keen wind."

I blinked.

"Aren't I wearing a hat?"

"No, sir."

I put up a hand and felt the lemon. He was perfectly right.

"Nor am I! I must have left it in Sippy's office. Wait here, Jeeves, while I fetch it."

"Very good, sir."

"I have much to say to you."

"Thank you, sir."

I galloped up the stairs and dashed in at the door. And something squashy fell on my neck, and the next minute the whole world was a solid mass of flour. In the agitation of the moment I had gone in at the wrong door; and what it all boils down to is that, if any more of my pals get inferiority complexes, they can jolly well get rid of them for themselves. Bertram is through.

# Do "Coming Events Cast their Shadows Before"— in Dreams or Premonitions?

By SIR OLIVER LODGE

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

EVERY now and then someone feels that they have a presentiment of disaster, or a prognostication of some event which has not yet taken place, perceived with a detail which seems to exclude or to make unlikely the notion of chance coincidence. Sometimes the impression comes between sleeping and waking, in what we call a dream, sometimes through a person in a state of trance, sometimes to sensitive people even in the waking state when their minds are not thoroughly occupied. The power of unconscious precognition, or of perceiving events before they happen, seems so unlikely that most people set it down to imagination; but even imagination has to be accounted for. The question is one of fact. Do such premonitions occur, and are they verified sufficiently often to make it a subject worthy of serious inquiry?

On the whole, some of the instances are so striking that students of the subject have considered it worthy of inquiry, though perhaps few are satisfied that they can come to a definite and final conclusion. Nevertheless some Continental Philosophers, who call themselves Materialists and who at any rate have no spiritualistic leaning, have expressed themselves satisfied that previsions do occur, though they can suggest no way of accounting for them. It often happens, however, that theory lags behind observation; and we ought not to reject a fact merely because we cannot explain it: most facts have been in that predicament at first. Remember that even now we cannot fully explain so simple a fact as the falling of a stone to the earth: it is a fact of common experience, we have got used to it, and mankind can get on very well without an explanation: most people do not even think that an explanation is wanted.

Many instances of domestic premonition have been recorded in the classical Treatise on "Human Personality," by F. W. H. Myers, and also in the Journal and Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research—to take only those records on which, as we know, great care was exercised and careful inquiries made, so as to secure that the narrative should be trustworthy and able to be appealed to for scientific purposes. The right way of documenting such predictions is specially attended to in a Presidential Address to the Society above mentioned, in Proceedings S.P.R., Vol. XVIII., for 1903/4, pages 16 and 17.

## SAMPLES OF TESTIMONY.

I have been asked to cite some examples or samples of carefully verified cases of premonition, so I select a few:—

Here, for example, is a monition or warning, the account of which was sent me in 1912 by Mr. John ——, of Beddgelert, North Wales. The details, with the necessary confirmations, will be found in the Journal of the S.P.R., Vol. XVI., pp. 29 31. Abbreviated, it may be summarized thus:—

> Mr. John —— had been visiting a certain quarry (of which he was the principal proprietor) with his brother; and after going away was suddenly seized with a sense of danger to the men in the quarry: which caused him, though remonstrated with on the absurdity of the proceedings, to stop at a telegraph office

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and send a telegram to the manager to stop their working, as they were in danger. The telegram, fortunately, was acted upon, though it seemed capricious; the men were sent out of the quarry, and then, about an hour later, the whole of the *débris* from one hundred and twenty yards above the quarry fell down, without warning. So the men were saved; but no sort of indication of any danger had been perceived by the manager or anyone else on the spot.

There may be normal ways of accounting for such a premonition, and some of these are suggested in the record; but, at any rate, it is a fact.

In another place (Journal S.P.R., XXI., 157) Sir William Barrett cites what he calls "the well-known case" of a dream by a specified person in Cornwall of the murder of Mr. Perceval, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1812: the dream, thrice repeated, occurring about a week before the event.

Sir William goes on to narrate another, written down at the time of its occurrence, in April, 1920, of a crystal vision by a Miss M. about another lady, here called (untruly) Mrs. Bolt (a stranger to her,) whom she met at a friend's house. Miss M. saw in the crystal that a tragedy was imminent which would make Mrs. Bolt a widow almost immediately. I give her narrative, greatly abbreviated:—

> Mrs. Bolt's husband, who was not present, was thought by her at the time to be in completely good health, without worries, and not likely to do anything rash. But the vision showed a man answering to his description pacing up and down a room; taking up a telephone and speaking excitedly into it: then opening a drawer in the desk, taking out a revolver, pointing it first at the door, then at his own head; then blood everywhere.
>
> Such a thing seemed so unlikely that Mrs. Bolt put it down to illusion and was not perturbed, but three days later the tragedy happened; the details being exactly as Miss M. had foreseen them.
>
> There was no known reason and no motive for Mr. Bolt's tragic suicide other than temporary insanity.

The case as told in full sounds a striking one, and there are confirmatory statements —which are always necessary.

IN a Paper published by that careful investigator Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, in the Proceedings of the Society, Vol. V., "On the Evidences for Premonitions," a number of authentic cases are given. It is difficult to summarize them, because the evidence in such cases depends a great deal on actual and confirmatory details. Here is one, however, recorded by a lady living at Twickenham, a Mrs. Alger, in January, 1883:—

> Some years ago, in March, my husband, who is an Army tutor, asked me to call at the Civil Service offices for some papers. I had come from Victoria Station, walking towards the Abbey, when, just before crossing over to Cannon Row, I felt someone touch me on the shoulder. I turned round and saw my husband's mother, looking very death-like. I said, "Oh, mother, what a start you gave me!" but she had gone. A feeling of great depression came over me, and I was quite unable to go on my husband's errand, but went home. All the way home I thought of what had happened, and as I got indoors I made up my mind to tell my husband and then at once go to Brixton, where his mother lived. However, I fainted before I saw Mr. Alger, and after recovering I felt unwell, so that I had to go to bed. After thinking the matter over I said nothing of what I had seen, but early in the evening, when my husband came into my room, I asked him to go and see his mother. We were talking it over as to whether it would be right to leave the boys by themselves, when I heard a voice say, "Come both of you on the twenty-second." (the 22nd of March is my birthday). I at once told my husband my day's experience, and added, "My birthday will be your mother's death-day." Mr. Alger went at once to Brixton, and on his return told me his mother had a cold, but was, on the whole, as well as ever; but on the 22nd of March, that is, four days after, we stood at her death-bed.

Here is a premonition which occurred in the East Indies in 1878, about the death of a child:—

> Some days prior to the child's illness, I was lying awake one morning when I distinctly heard a voice say, "If there is darkness at the eleventh hour there will be death." In alarm I started up in bed, and the same words were slowly and deliberately repeated.
>
> Naturally enough, when, about a week after, the child was taken seriously ill, I watched with perturbed feelings and grave anxiety the aspect of the sky, day and night, the moon being at the full just then. Two or three days passed; the little one hovered between life and death; above, the sun blazed with unmitigated fervour, relentless heat, no sign of cloud or disturbance of the atmosphere in any way. Twice in the course of every twenty-four hours was eleven o'clock looked for with

trembling apprehension. At last, after more than a week of this cloudless weather, a few minutes before eleven in the morning a squall arose with extraordinary suddenness; servants flew to close the Venetian shutters, making the inside of the house extremely dark. The sky became black with clouds, and my heart sank. That day, soon after one o'clock, the child's spirit quitted its little mortal frame.

Occasionally a useful warning seems to be conveyed in a dream:—

September 17th, 1884.

I was going to spend the day with my sister at Roehampton, and the night previous, just as I was going to sleep, I was startled by a vision before me of the carriage, which was to meet me at Mortlake Station, being upset in the road close by her house. This quite woke me up, and I tried to forget it, but, on going off to sleep again, the same vision returned, exactly as at first, and I then began to feel very nervous about my visit of the next day; but eventually I went to sleep, and it did not come back to my mind. When I woke in the morning it was as a dream, quite gone.

I went by train to Mortlake, and had to wait at the station for a few minutes. Then the groom drove up quickly with a pony carriage, and apologized for the carriage not being there, but the order had not been given in time to get it ready. Everything went smoothly till we were driving up the lane to my sister's house, when the horse became very restive, the groom got down, but could find nothing wrong, so we went on; this happened a second and a third time, but when he was examining the horse for the third time my vision of the night before suddenly came back to me, and I told the groom I would get out and walk to the house; he tried to dissuade me, but I felt nervous and insisted upon walking, so he drove off by himself, and had only got a very short distance from me when the horse became quite unmanageable. I hurried on some men in the road to help him, but before they reached him the carriage, horse, and groom were all in a confused broken heap in the hedge, just as I had seen it the night before, though not exactly in the same spot. The groom managed to extricate himself, but when I got up to him he said he was so thankful I insisted upon getting out, for he could not possibly have saved me from a dreadful accident.

**I felt someone touch me on the shoulder. I turned round and saw my husband's mother, looking very death-like.**

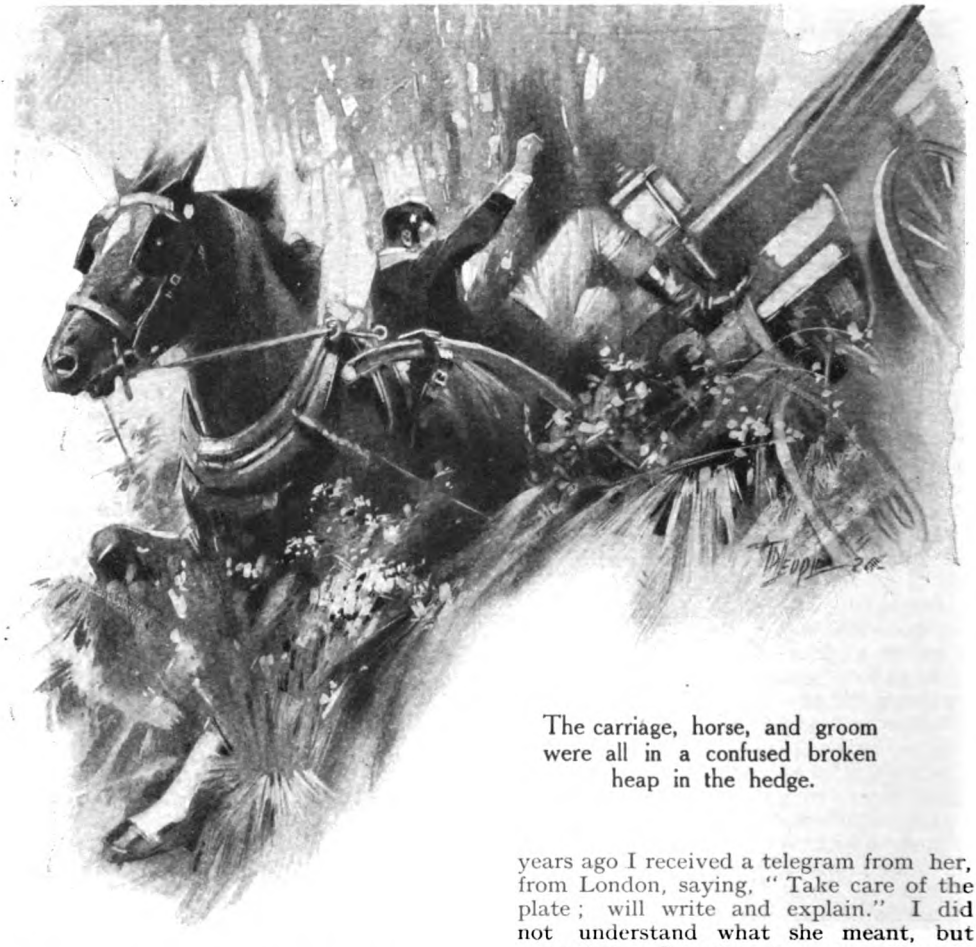
I had no fear of horses. I should certainly not have left the carriage but for the forewarning of the previous night.

[Then follows signature.]

Here is an account from a Secretary to the Admiral Commanding in Ireland:—

18th December, 1883.

On Sunday, 11th September, 1881, while proceeding in H.M.S. *Phœnix* from Newfoundland to Halifax, Nova Scotia, I dreamt that one of my brother officers was lying dead in a house at Portsmouth. The dream was so vivid that it quite disturbed my mind the following morning, and it was with difficulty that I could shake off the uncomfortable feeling. At breakfast I sat opposite the officer, and looking round the table I remarked: "I dreamt last night that I saw one of you



The carriage, horse, and groom were all in a confused broken heap in the hedge.

fellows lying dead, but I won't say which, as I don't want to spoil your appetite." In the course of the afternoon, as we were steaming into Halifax harbour, *the* officer was sitting at the stove in the wardroom joining in an animated conversation about the speed of the ship, etc. A few minutes after we anchored I went on shore, and returned again on board at 10 p.m., and as I was about to go below to my cabin the officer of the watch motioned me to be silent, and approaching me said, "Poor S. is dead, he has just died suddenly"; and as I passed across the mess-room I beheld the officer of my dream lying dead in his cabin.

The predictions are by no means always about death. Here is one about burglary, from a lady in Italy:—

The following occurred to my mother, the most matter-of-fact person and not one to be easily impressed. About three years ago I received a telegram from her, from London, saying, "Take care of the plate; will write and explain." I did not understand what she meant, but nevertheless I took extra precautions in shutting up the house at night, and awaited my mother's letter. It appears she had dreamed that she had been aroused from her sleep by a noise, that she got up to see what it was, and went out on to the staircase, and on looking down she saw our dining-room here in Italy, and a man was filling a bag with the plate, which another man was handing to him from the sideboard. She heard one man say to the other, in Italian, "To-morrow we will go to Genoa and spend Sunday" (that making it Friday that they were robbing us). One of the men, looking up suddenly, saw my mother, and began mounting the stairs with a long knife in his hand, and the fright woke my mother. But the impression was so vivid that she sent me a telegram the next morning (Thursday), being quite sure that our house would be robbed on the Friday night. It was not, however; but the following Wednesday

a band of robbers broke into the house nearest to us and carried off everything, but they were taken the next day, when they confessed that they intended on the Friday to rob our house, and then go to Genoa. Among the things taken with them were a bag and a long knife answering to the ones my mother described. My mother has great common sense, and held until then all superstitious presentiments and belief in dreams as really wrong, yet on this occasion her dream was so clear that she not only acted in contradiction to all her previous opinions, but even thought it sufficiently urgent to necessitate a telegram.

The following dream is not of an accident, but of the appearance of one who later in the day met with an accident :—

On Sunday morning, the 29th September, 1878, I roused my husband by speaking in my sleep in a moaning and distressed manner. I said, "Oh, B., what is the matter with your face?" and then began to sob. My husband woke me and inquired the cause of my distress. I said, "I saw B." (mentioning the name of my nurse) "standing in the nursery with her back turned to me, and when I spoke to her, and she half turned round, I saw the side of her face terribly cut and bruised." Hence my distressed inquiry as to the cause of the injury.

That Sunday evening she did not appear as usual at family prayers, and upon inquiring the reason of her absence the cook replied, "B. has met with an accident, ma'am, and has fallen out of the Metropolitan train." I rushed upstairs, and there, in precisely the same position as I had seen her in my dream, stood B., with the side of her face cut and bruised as I had seen it, and, without thinking of

Looking down she saw a man filling a bag with the plate from the sideboard.

the coincidence at the moment, I said, "Oh, B., what is the matter with your face?" and as I said the words the whole dream flashed vividly across my memory.

The following two independent cases are of dreams about trivial matters :—

I.

August 21st, 1884.

I have lately been very anxious about the success of a young friend who had been examined for a Sandhurst cadetship. The list of successful candidates was due on the 15th August. About ten days before that date I dreamed that I saw the list, and that a boy of the same name as my friend (Johnson) was two places from the bottom. I mentioned this to my sisters in the morning. About three days after I dreamed exactly the same thing, with the addition that I noticed that the initials of the Christian names were not those of my friend. I did not see clearly what they were, but only that they were wrong. I mentioned this second dream to my family, saying that I now believed our friend would pass, although it was considered very unlikely that he should do so. When the Sandhurst list appeared in *The Times* of August 15th, we looked first at the bottom of the list, and there, second from the end, was the name of Johnson, but it was that of a stranger, as I had dreamed. Our friend (of the same name, but other initials) was seventy-first on the same list.

II.

The second case is this :—

I thought there were several people in our drawing-room, among others Mr. J., and I left the room for a few minutes to see if supper was ready, and when I came back to the drawing-room I found the carpet, which was a new one, all covered with black spots. I was very angry, and when Mr. J. said it was ink stains, I retorted, "Don't say so; I know it has been burnt, and I counted five patches." So ends the dream.

Well, we all went to church, it being Sunday, and on our return Mr. J. came with us to luncheon, a thing he had never done before, and some others joined our party. I went into the dining-room to see if things were ready, and then, going back into the drawing-room, I noticed a spot near the door and asked who had been in with dirty feet; being a new carpet I was particular. Mr. J., as in my dream, said it was surely ink, and then pointed out some more spots, when I called out, "Oh! my dream! my new carpet! burnt!" As we afterwards discovered, the housemaid had allowed the fire to go out, and had carried in live coal from another room in a shovel, which she had tilted against the door, and spilt the coals on the carpet, burning five holes.

I will only take one instance from the collection in Mr. Myers's book, "Human Personality." It is among the Appendices to Chapter IV., Vol. I.—a case of a dream which probably did prevent a rather serious accident.

We were living in Hertford Street, Mayfair. One day I determined that on the morrow I would drive to Woolwich in our brougham, taking my little child and nurse, to spend the day with a relation. During the night I had a painfully clear dream in vision of the brougham turning up one of the streets north of Piccadilly; and then of myself standing on the pavement and holding my child, our old coachman falling on his head on the road—his hat smashed in. This so much discomposed me that when in the morning I sent for the coachman to give him his orders, I almost hoped that some obstacle to the drive might arise, so that I might have an excuse for going by train. The coachman was an old and valued servant. I asked him if he would have the carriage ready to drive to Woolwich at ten. He was not given to making difficulties; but he hesitated, and when I suggested eleven instead, he said that he would prefer that hour. He gave no reason for his hesitation, and said that the horse was quite well. I told him almost eagerly that I could quite well go by train; but he said that all was right.

We went to Woolwich and spent the day. All went well until we reached Piccadilly on the return journey. Then I saw that other coachmen were looking at us; and looking through the glass front of the brougham I saw that the coachman was leaning back in his seat, as though the horse were pulling violently, of which, however, I felt no sign. We turned up Down Street. He retained his attitude. My dream flashed back upon me. I called to him to stop, jumped out, caught hold of my child, and called to a policeman to catch the coachman. Just as he did so the coachman swayed and fell off the box. If I had been in the least less prompt, he would have fallen just as I saw him in my dream. I found afterwards that the poor man had been suffering from a serious attack of diarrhœa on the previous day, and had gradually fainted

The coachman swayed and fell off the box.

from exhaustion during the drive home. He was absolutely sober; and his only mistake had been in thinking that he was strong enough to undertake the long drive. In this case my premonitory dream differed from the reality in two points. In my dream we approached Down Street from the west; in reality we came from the east. In my dream the coachman actually fell on his head, the crushing of his hat on the road being the most vivid point of my dream. In reality this was just averted by the prompt action which my anxious memory of the dream inspired.

[Signature of Lady Z.]

SUCH are a few samples illustrative of the curious power of unconscious prognostication, retailed in an abbreviated form. Anyone who wishes to study or criticize them should refer to the original publication, where confirmatory evidence and critical remarks will be found. Standing alone, without confirmations, they may strike people as bald and unconvincing narratives. But as a matter of fact such occurrences are not very rare. Nearly every family has a record of something of the kind among its members. People don't talk much about them, because they rightly fear the charge of superstition. But facts are the raw material on which ultimately a theory can be based; and the object of scientific inquiry is to remove things from the region of superstition into the domain of knowledge. That is the whole object of psychical inquiry at the present time. Any real fact must have its place in a systematic and orderly universe, and in due time we shall be able to specify what that place is. At present some facts lie in a partially explored territory outside the region of recognized science.

# In the House of the Russian

## A STORY OF MONTE CARLO

By

## H. de VERE STACPOOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

I.

MONTE CARLO caters for all sorts of people, for the people who use the Riviera Palace or the Hôtel de Paris, and for the people who patronize Mme. Toussaint's Pension down in La Condamine.

The latter have just as much fun as the former—often a great deal more—and at a fifth of the expense; also, they tell me, the food is better, or at least the cooking, real old French country cooking, done by Monsieur Toussaint, a little apple-cheeked Frenchman, who spends his life mostly in carpet slippers.

Toussaint of a morning vanishes to the markets with a basket to buy the provisions for the day, whilst Mme. Toussaint makes the beds, empties the slops, beeswaxes the floors, and lays the service for *déjeuner*, assisted at the date of this story—which is not a fairy tale—by a princess.

A real princess—Russian.

Olga Anakoff was her *nom de broom*, this woman who had once worn her diamonds at the Winter Palace and was now dish-washer and general servant to Mme. Toussaint; this woman who had once been the presiding genius of vast house-parties, and who had only to rest a moment from her dish-washing to hear on the wireless of memory the band of the Guards playing at Peterhof, the howl of the wolves in the great forests of the Anakoff estates, the tinkle of the sleigh-bells across the snow.

She was no longer quite young; her face in repose was almost plain, but it was a face wonderfully full of character. She had beautiful eyes, and when she smiled they were lit with the light of a brave and brilliant soul.

Her adventures, could they be put down in a book, would be too improbable for fiction; her escape across the Volga; her hiding at Riazan; the devotion to her of Ivan, the son of Ivan, a rascally forest guard, who not only risked his life a hundred times, but held to her to his end. The death of her husband at Woronetz; the crossing of the Dnieper and Danube, Varna, Constantinople, where Ivan had been killed in a quarrel—for he had capped all his heroic deeds by a blazing bout of drunkenness—all that mad dream, even as a story of fact, because of its ungraspability, would leave the reader cold.

Mme. Toussaint knew that this servant of hers was a Russian *grande dame*. Olga had never made any secret of the matter; the boarders knew it, but it did not make the slightest difference to them or cause them the slightest surprise. She was a Russian refugee, no longer young. Grand Duchess, Princess, that was nothing; that sort of people were all over the place, selling in shops, serving in *cafés*, painting pictures; the fortunate ones selling their jewels bit by bit. That sort of people were cheap, and the Toussaints and their customers were not exceptional in this point of view.

Mme. Toussaint in private conversation was always impressing upon her female boarders that she paid Olga just as much as she would have paid a French or Italian servant. They doubted the fact, but it *was* a fact. Mother Toussaint was a just woman, and when she found that an assistant could be more honest, far cleaner, and more careful with china, glass, and crockery ware than the ordinary French or Italian maid-of-all-work, she was not disposed to pay her less just because she had danced at the Winter Palace in 1913.

Now, the strange thing about the Russian refugees is the fact that the ones who have retained their wealth have retained their dignity in the eyes of Europe. Olga knew

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that those few favoured ones still existed like exotic flowers, blossoming by the tennis courts of Cannes and on the golf course of Mont Angel, dining with the left-over Royalty and aristocracy of Europe. At times when she thought of this, of the manner in which the aristocracies of England, France, and Spain have stood aside whilst the noble women of Russia were being prostituted, driven by the whip of starvation into Constantinople brothels and dancing-rooms, strewn, what were left of them, through the great cities of Europe—when she thought of this there were times when Olga could have cursed the Spanish and the French and the English, and would have done so, maybe, had she not been checked by the memory of her own more fortunate countrymen and women.

Yet even against those she could feel no bitterness in face of the fact that their remnants of wealth were as nothing in the general *débâcle*—and it is so easy to say "Give," and so difficult to give when one's all can be carried in a handkerchief—even if the contents be sapphires and diamonds.

So after several struggles with herself and the casting out, at length, of all bitterness, Olga settled down to her house-work and found life not unendurable at first. The whole of this experience was so strange that the very strangeness of it all was an antidote to the horror of it. It was like being shot out of one's house on a freezing night and the door banged on one—for ever. As a young woman she had been troubled by a recurring dream. She would find herself walking in the Nevski Prospekt in her nightdress; walking, not driving. Well, it was like that, mixed up with other things. Yet life was not unendurable. The house-work was, in fact, a pleasure; Mme. Toussaint was not unkindly, a woman of the people, with such a rough and honest spirit that it was not an indignity to serve her.

But the boarders!—ah! the boarders were different. They were not people on whom she cared to wait or for whom she cared to fetch and carry. Farm servants, workmen, common sailors, dustmen; for those she would have proved a willing enough servant, but the boarders at Mme. Toussaint's were not such as those, but of the bourgeois type. There was here a shopkeeper from Nimes, and his wife, and the wife was loud in manner and jewellery, and the jewellery was mostly glass. There was an old gentleman with a leer who had squeezed Olga's waist suddenly in the passage one day, receiving a box on the head that echoed through the house. He didn't mind it, he leered at her just the same.

There were two Englishwomen who looked young at a distance, who went thirty-mile walks with sticks and rucksacks, disputed the bill every time, did their own washing, and used Mme. Toussaint's electricity for heating their iron; also they imported whatever in the way of alcohol they consumed, drinking water at dinner. There was a Spanish Count, a young man with an old expression of face, well-dressed as if by an English tailor, but an English tailor who had become infected by foreign ideals—or, at least, ideas. He wore a great deal of jewellery, and he went for long walks. Sometimes he would be forty-eight hours away. This man gave Olga considerable thought; she could not place him. Then there was the inevitable old lady, travelling by herself, a nuisance to everyone; also a frank Prussian with a pyramidal head, who might have been the suggester of Napoleon's idea that the Prussian was hatched from a cannon-ball.

Such were a few of the people whom Olga had to serve against her will or, at least, her taste, but they were never quite the same, as a crowd. To-morrow the Prussian would be gone, giving her a big tip, and next day the Englishwomen, leaving three francs on their dressing-table and a wardrobe-top full of jam jars, egg-shells, empty bottles, and what not; gone, and their places taken by others not more, and sometimes less, desirable.

## II.

OLGA had been six months at this caravanserai and the season was drawing on to its end, when one day a newcomer arrived who interested her. The others did not see any difference between him and themselves, except for the fact that he was not nearly so "stylish" as some of them, but for Olga he was of another creation.

A middle-aged man with a greyish, pointed beard, a lazy manner, and a cigarette—that was Jean Matisse at first sight, but he improved on close acquaintance; like Olga, his eyes were his strong point, eyes full of intelligence and charm and distance. He was a dreamer, this person, who ought to have got on much better in the world than he had done, a writer who wanted only leisure.

He had everything else.

But, devil-driven in the office of the *Petit Parisien*, you can't get leisure, and you are so tired by the end of the day you can't think. So it had been for years. He had started as press-man, a writer of articles, a haunter of *cafés*. He was well paid, yet poor as any rat on the parvis of Notre Dame. He had fearful faults, laziness the worst of them, yet he did an enormous amount of work of sorts. The Oriental laziness of his nature held him from lifting himself out of the groove, held him from setting out on

the great business of the book that would have made his name.

He was one of the few men to whom money would have been a benefit in starting their careers.

He had come to Monte Carlo for the sake of his health, and to the Pension Toussaint for economy's sake. On the verge of a nervous breakdown, money had been given to him by friends for a holiday, forced on him and into his pocket, together with a ticket of leave from his editor.

This was the man who attracted the attention of Olga Anakoff, and who, after a while, won her heart by his kindly manner, his personality, and his courtesy; for it seems that by some means he had discovered her story, and by his manner to her she knew it.

III.

JEAN had been a fortnight at Monte Carlo before he thought of looking at the tables.

This true Parisian, who, but for his illness, might have lived and died without breaking from his true environment, was not greatly moved by the proximity of the Casino—the presence of the sun moved him much more. Yes, it had to be admitted that this was a better sun in some ways than the sun of Paris, "louder," stronger, better for the purpose of growing vegetables and flowers and assisting invalids back to health, but in other ways not to be compared with the shy sun of the Tuileries Gardens.

He sat in it, reading books sent to him from Paris, permitting it to warm him whilst he warmed himself with Bergson or Charles Guye, and every day it was "Oh, I must go and have a look at the Casino to-morrow."

Till, one day, he went.

Jean wasn't very particular about his dress, and in the old pre-war days, when brown shoes or dusty boots were a barrier to the Rooms, I doubt if they would have let him in. But it is different now. His ticket was handed him, and, crossing the atrium, he entered the Rooms.

He looked round. The place seemed just as he had always pictured it to be. The tables with their several crowds, the croupiers, the silence, broken only by the rattle of the roulette balls and the voices of the croupiers, the decorations by Garnier, the architect of this Palace of Iniquity.

Curiosity took him by the arm and led him to the first table on the right. He watched the play and the players. There was no coin on the table, only counters and notes. After a while he forgot the players and became absorbed in the play.

He went to the little bureau and bought four ten-franc counters and placed two of them on red; in a moment he had won twenty francs. Then he looked at the numbers on the board. It was the twenty-fifth of the month, and, realizing that, a sudden inspiration came to him and he put a counter on number twenty-five. It won. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

A woman got up and he took her chair. He put a counter on number twenty, because he was forty years of age, and twice twenty makes forty. He won.

People began to look at him. Here was a mascot.

He put forty francs on black, and again he won.

Then he turned very cunning; the feeling that luck couldn't last without a break came to him, and this time he ventured only ten francs; he put it on black, red turned up. This pleased him; he had given Fortune a sop in the pan. Next time he played more boldly and won.

Then there came to him an extraordinary feeling, a sort of clairvoyant knowledge that he couldn't lose. The feeling gamblers know when they say that Luck is with them.

AN hour and five minutes later he rose and left the Rooms. He had lost every penny he possessed. Every cent. The money he owed Mme. Toussaint for that week's board and lodging, the money that would have kept him for another month, the money that would have paid for his journey back to Paris. The good blue and pink bank-notes that had stuffed his pocket-book—all were gone. If you had told him a few hours ago that this disaster had befallen another man he would have said: "But he must have been mad."

He wasn't mad: he was quite sane, yet—there it was.

This is the sort of thing that makes men kill themselves at Monte Carlo. It is happening every day, happening as I am writing this.

He stood on the steps of the Casino, looking at the people sitting at the tables in front of the Café de Paris. Though he was not absolutely lost, though he could apply for and possibly get the *viatique*, though he could wire to his editor for the money to pay his bill and bring him home—borrowing the telegraph charges from Mme. Toussaint—these hateful ways and means did not occur to him for the moment, stunned as he was, feeling like a man suddenly at the bottom of a staircase with a broken back.

He came down the steps past the Café de Paris and then uphill by the Alexandra Hotel to a long street of shops. He had been here before, but the place seemed strange; it might have been a street in Jerusalem

He rose and left the Rooms. He had lost every penny he pcssessed. Every cent.

for all he knew or cared. It was here that direction came to him and common sense, urging him to get back at once to La Condamine and put his case before Mme. Toussaint, and it was here that his soul, or his spirit, if you like the word better, spoke to him as it had never spoken before.

"After all," said the spirit of Jean Matisse, "you are an honest man!"

It was like finding a large sum of money in his pocket, that thought—at least, it was almost like it.

It was better than a glass of absinthe.

"After all, I am an honest man!"

That fact took him in its safe keeping for the moment. It was a letter of credit; he could cash it with Mme. Toussaint, with his editor, and with all the world as far

as sympathy went. He held up his head and, turning, made his way west for La Condamine.

It was not yet two o'clock; he had missed *déjeuner;* the other guests had either retired to their rooms for a siesta or gone out, and Olga had finished clearing away. There was no one in the *salle à manger*, and there was no one in the little smoking-room on the opposite side of the passage. He came into the smoking-room and took his seat in one of the cane chairs, placing his hat on a table.

The Honest Man formula had somehow lost its grip upon him; he was honest enough, but, as a matter of fact, he was neither built by Nature nor fashioned by circumstance to meet a disaster like this and make good weather of it. Kindly, easy-going, pleasure-loving, and an artist to his finger-tips, he contemplated the task before him with a feeling of desolate incapacity and utter loathing.

Mme. Toussaint was kindness itself, but she was a French peasant in mind, body, and outlook. He knew the type. Money to her meant a lot—she would look on him with quite different eyes when he had told her his story—and there was the telling of it. How would he begin? What would he say? He was seated with his head bent engaged in these reflections when Olga came in. It was part of her duties to look to the ash-trays in the smoking-room, but at sight of Jean she forgot the ash-trays. She saw at once that something had happened to him.

"*Déjeuner* is cleared away, Monsieur," said she, "but it is not too late, and if you will permit me——"

"No, thank you," replied he. "I have no appetite to-day, or at least till I have seen Madame," he laughed, and suddenly his mercurial spirits rose, warmed by the presence of a person of his own class and with whom he had already established a certain *rapport*. "The fact is, I've been getting myself into a mess, a thing quite easy to do in Monte Carlo, it seems to me."

Then he told. How easy it was, telling it all as a kind of half-joke, describing the moves of the game that had brought him into "this mess," even caricaturing the croupier who had swept up his last counter.

But Olga did not laugh. She listened, sympathetic, serious, contemplative, seeming to weigh things in her mind, silent, till he had finished. Then she spoke:—

"And you are going to Mme. Toussaint, you say, to help you in all this?" She had dropped the "Monsieur." "To ask for her assistance—but you must not do any such thing."

"Well, that is good news," said Jean, lightly, "for I assure you it is the last thing I want to do; but since Mme. Toussaint is the only living person in Monte Carlo to whom I can apply for help, it seems to me that the only living person that can help me in Monte Carlo is Mme. Toussaint."

"You treat this as a joke," said she.

"I do," said he. "In the war I saw a man with his chest nearly shot in two, and he treated it as a joke. I am a wounded man, why should I blubber?"

"Well, then, Mr. Wounded Man," said Olga, "your wound is cured. I know a Russian who, at my request, will lend you all the money you want and charge you no interest. You can repay the loan when you can."

Jean looked at her.

Servant and guest had vanished; they had been talking to one another just as though they had met on the social plane common to both.

"But—excuse me——" said he, "the Russians——"

"I know," she replied, "they are in poverty, most of them, yet not all. The Russian I speak of is wealthy, and when I say: 'My friend, here is M. Jean Matisse in a difficulty, please lend him what he requires,' the money will be forthcoming."

"But——" said Jean.

"I know," said Olga; "but why should I do this for M. Jean Matisse? Well, Monsieur, I do it because M. Jean Matisse, without recognizing my true social position, has made me feel with marvellous delicacy that he has been aware of it, because, equally condemned by straitened means, we have been fellow-voyagers in this ship with a strange crew, and because I do not wish him the pain of an explanation with Mme. Toussaint, who is not constructed to understand how foolishly sometimes an artist and a gentleman may be induced to act."

"You take a weight off my mind," said Jean. "If your Russian will do this for me I shall never forget it, and whether he does or he doesn't I'll never forget your kind words and your sympathy. They make being robbed worth while, and they cast a white light on the coarse, dull grain of the world we live in and the bourgeoisie who rob us in their shops and gambling rooms, and to whom nothing is existent, not aristocracy nor talent, unless it carries a purse in its hands. Oh, damn the bourgeoisie!—excuse me, excuse me—I speak under stress, but there is one thing you must admit of excellence in your enemy, Lenin—he felt as we do about the bourgeoisie; at least, I judge so from his actions."

"Now you are talking politics," said she. "I have no time for politics. In an hour

from now, that is to say, at three o'clock, be at the station of the Funicular Railway; our Russian lives at La Turbie. I will meet you there and we will go together. It is not my day for going out, but I can make arrangements with Madame. Wait a moment, please."

She went off and returned with some biscuits and a half bottle of Château Citron; told him to eat the biscuits, drink the wine, and not talk to her, and then set to on her work, clearing the ash-trays and tidying the room.

IV.

THEY met at the Funicular station.

She had changed into her outdoor clothes and she looked what she was, a woman of good position in reduced circumstances.

He bought the tickets. He had remembered a five-franc note in the pocket of his overcoat upstairs, and he had fetched it, thus saving himself the indignity of having to depend on her for the fare. All the same, he was possessed of the most curious feeling of dependence as he sat beside her watching Monte Carlo slide away below, a feeling recalling his boyhood and trips taken with his mother to Versailles and Fontainebleau, trips tinged with a vague anxiety lest he would lose her in the crowd and be left penniless and without the means of getting home, for his mother always carried the purse and the tickets.

At La Turbie they turned to the left along the single street of the hill town, above which the broken Tower of Augustus stands immense, as it has stood through the ages.

They left the houses behind and, leaving the road, she led the way up a bank to a tiny olive grove that the motor dust did not reach, and from which the little town of Eze showed itself, and beyond Eze the blue, blue sea.

Here she sat down.

"But the house of this Russian—— ?" said Jean, taking his seat beside her.

"Here is the house of this Russian," replied Olga, glancing up at the sky through the trees and then at distant Eze; "the house to which she always comes when she has a holiday from the Pension Toussaint."

These words came to Jean as a shock. Was she mad ?

SHE took a handkerchief from her pocket, and from the handkerchief three most lovely rings, whose diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires glittered in the sun sparkles through the olive branches as she placed them on her fingers.

For a moment she sat as if unconscious of his presence, then she began to talk. She seemed talking to the distant sea as well as to him.

"I must tell you about the Russian," said she, "this Russian whose palace has neither walls nor roof, whose pictures, such as those around us, have been hung in no academy, whose roses have turned to wild flowers, such as these at our feet, whose soul has discovered the illusion that lies in wealth.

"She escaped from the great *débâcle* with her husband and her jewels. Her husband died, then were only left to her the jewels; these are some of them, the rest are in the keeping of the Crédit Lyonnais.

"She could not sell them.

"She could fling them in the sea; she could starve to death, but she could not sell those things that were part of her lost self. Oh, you do not understand about jewels and how they can become part of a woman, and you do not understand how they can become part of her past and social state.

"So would an exiled Emperor cling to his crown as this poor Russian to her jewels.

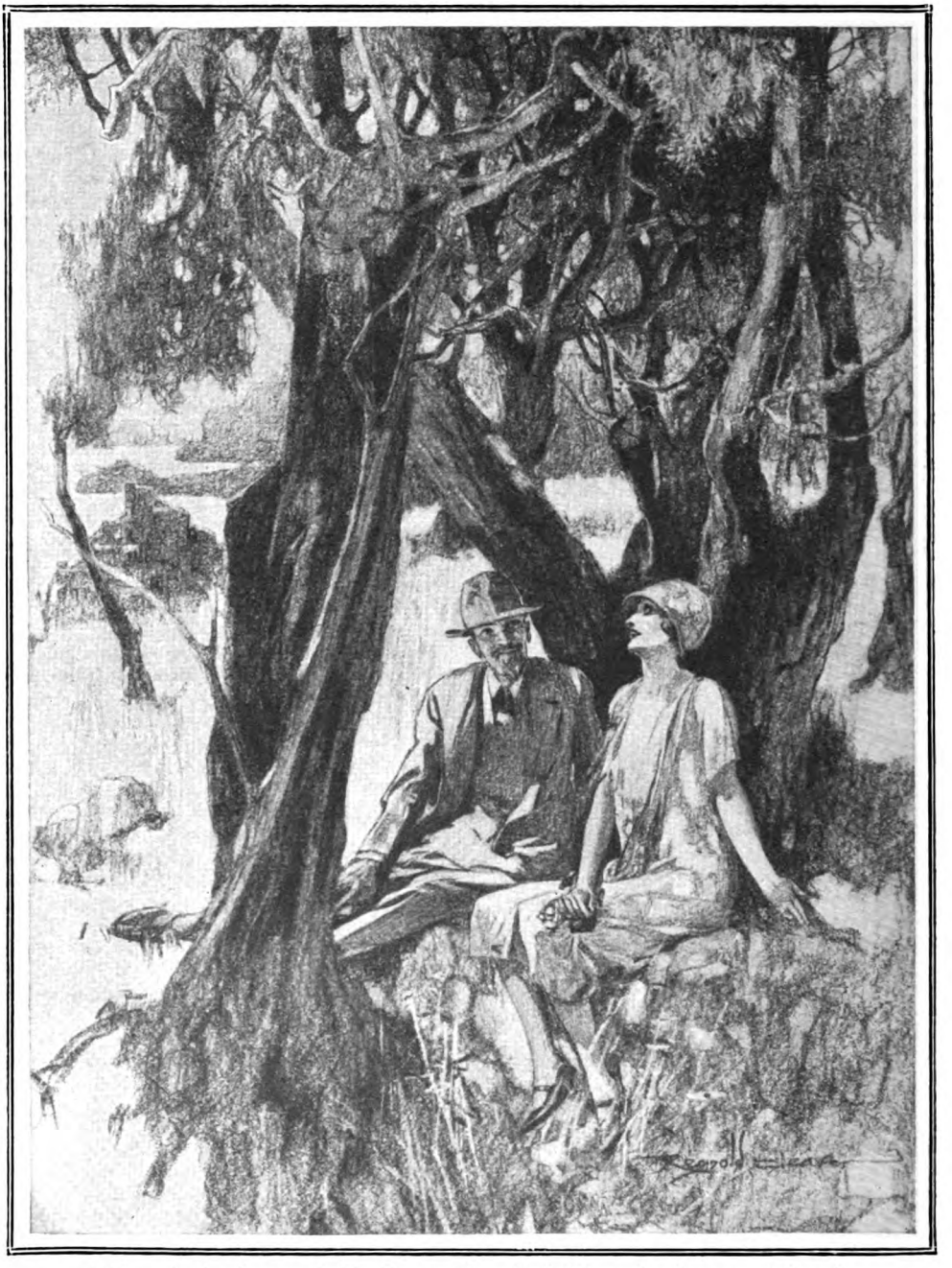
"Sell them to live ? Never ! Not even one little one, for to sell one would be to break the charm, to break the resolution; to sell one would be like the crack that comes in the river bank, the crack that makes the bank to give, so that presently the Neva is over all the land.

"Well, if she were not to sell them to live, how could she live ? Only by work.

"But she had no trade, her idle hands had never learned to make lace, to do embroidery, to paint those pictures that women of society construct for artists to laugh over. She had no trade, but she had two hands and the instincts of a woman for the work to be done in a house. When she had deposited her jewels in the hands of the Crédit Lyonnais here in Monte Carlo she had left only a few francs and her wrist-watch, which, not being part of her insignia, she sold for three thousand francs.

"With two thousand francs she tried her luck at the tables and lost, then with the help of a friend she obtained employment at Mme. Toussaint's. She kept these three rings by her, always carefully hidden, always there to look at in secret, always saying to her: 'You might have sold us and the rest for a million francs—for what ? Life in a big hotel, life as a rich Russian of noble birth in a world where your fellows are begging their bread.' That thought alone would have held her firm, but the strongest influence with her was just the power of the things themselves, the knowledge that they were part of her state, and the hope that some day when the Bolsheviks were overthrown they might be resumed.

"Well, God was going to show her something else. He showed her humanity in



**"Here is the house of this Russian," replied Olga, glancing up at the sky through the trees.**

the Pension Toussaint: it was not always a pleasant sight, but somehow it was warm. All those people were of the common order, but they had their lives and hopes, their wives and husbands and children, they had in them something that this aristocratic Russian had never met with in the circles of the Court.

"They made her feel, as she washed the dishes and helped to make the beds, a

loneliness which had nothing to do with class distinction, an isolation which was not the isolation of an aristocrat among the bourgeoisie, but of a human being cut off from the herd.

" Her heart said to her : ' Well, what is the use, of what good is life if one is alone, alone with no one to laugh with or talk to, without the little interests that a single person cannot have, without anyone to care for or to care for one ? '

" So things went on, and then one day a stranger came to Mme. Toussaint's. He was, like this Russian, no longer very young, but he was kindly and with knowledge of things, and different from the others, and the heart of the Russian went out to him

" Understand me, I am not talking of that love, so beautiful in youth, so absurd in age. Her heart went out, not to a man but to a human being. His socks wanted darning, and that pleased her and hurt her. Pleased her because she could darn them for him ; hurt her because he was too good and kind to have been so neglected in that Paris from which he had come.

" Then he would leave his room in frightful disorder, coats and collars here and there, cigarette ashes everywhere. He burned holes in the sheets, smoking in bed, and she and Mme. Toussaint would have long consultations about him, deploring his case, but agreeing that clever men who wrote books, and were always to be seen with their noses in old volumes about God knows what, were made like that by the good God who made men stupid as well as clever, and that to talk to him about it might hurt him, an impossible thing to do to one so kindly and good—not knowing that he was really bad, for one day this good and kindly man went, led no doubt by the devil, to the Casino of Monte Carlo, and lost all his money." She paused.

" Go on," said Jean, a laugh in his voice.

" She found him in the smoking-room, very depressed. He was going to Mme Toussaint to borrow from her the money to pay his bills and to take him home.

" It was then that the jewels in the safe of the Crédit Lyonnais spoke to her, saying : ' If you sell one of us, you must sell all ' ; and she answered them : ' I am content, you have no longer any hold upon me, you are beautiful, but cold and useless to a woman who has learned to crave for better things than jewels—for sympathy and companionship and a heart to care for her.' " She ceased, and a tear ran down her face.

" LET us be plain about the matter," said Jean Matisse. " This Russian in escaping from the overthrow managed to save her jewels, they were in fact more than jewels, they were a concrete part of her past and of the position that she held in society. She was extraordinarily strong in mind, as well as tenacious of her dignity. Other Russians might sell the emblems of their class to maintain themselves without work. She chose to work to maintain those emblems. Madame, it was fine. I say it as a Republican who is partly a Communist. It was fine. My homage. Now let us proceed. Knowing instinctively that to break the spell and sell one of those things would be to sell all, she yet prepares to do so for the sake of an idiot——"

" No, not an idiot," murmured Olga.

" Well, an ass who has gambled away his money and finds himself in an impossible position. She has learned, it seems, to care for him——"

" To like him."

" To care for him, and he has learned to care for her. Do not let us mince matters, to care for her as he has never cared for any other woman in the world."

She sighed contentedly.

" It could not be otherwise," he went on, " and the sudden revelation of a beautiful soul has been as a great white light showing him the world in a new aspect, and his past from a new angle. Showing him a man who not only leaves his coats and collars lying about in confusion, but a man who has let the world do with him what it will, who, earning money enough for two, has squandered his francs in easy living, in *cafés*, and amongst doubtful companions."

He suddenly stopped and took her two hands.

" We will go together to Mme. Toussaint and explain matters and make arrangements ; we will get money so that we can return to Paris ; you can even leave with her one of these wonderful rings to be redeemed by me ; you shall sell not one of those things you love. There is only one thing I ask you to do—be the wife of a poor man."

" Never," said she, " with a million in my hand the wife of a poor man ! Never—wealth or poverty, it does not matter, but greatness, that is everything, and you shall be great, that is the true wealth, and that shall be yours and mine. But in this world, my friend, nothing is done without money, or done so slowly and with such heart-breaking that the prize when gained is lost. I know you, you who do not know yourself. Leave all these things to me, and my money——"

" I never can take."

" No," said she, " nor would I give you it, spendthrift that you are."

She took his face between her hands and kissed him on the lips.

# The Legacy

By

## MADELINE GARDNER

*ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.*

OLD Miss Brindenhurst lived by herself in a comfortable house in Lancaster Gate. She had lived there now for many years—the sole survivor of a large and scattered family. Of a younger generation there were, of course, numerous relations—nephews and nieces. There was Tom, with his charming wife and baby boy. He was Miss Brindenhurst's godson, and never, by any chance, let her forget the fact. There was Bill in Australia, Fred in India, Maud married to a very hard-up curate in the Midlands, and—last but not least—a couple of startlingly modern grand-nieces who shared a flat in town and massaged the lines of age, ill-temper, and discontent out of the faces of such of their plainer neighbours as had time, money, and optimism to spare. To all her younger relations Miss Brindenhurst showed a polite indifference, and to old Miss Brindenhurst most of her younger relations showed a gushing affection, and, as far as possible, their empty bank-books. Perhaps, of the whole family, Maud, the curate's wife, really showed a more indecent avariciousness than any of the others. She seemed to find it impossible to see her aunt even for an hour without referring to the meagreness of her dress allowance, to poor Dick's need of a good long holiday, or to the extreme difficulty they had in paying for the children's nurse.

Towards the middle of October Maud Wickenham, who happened to be in town for a few days, called at the house in Lancaster Gate to see her aunt. Miss Brindenhurst who had been out driving, returned soon after her niece's arrival, and submitted, without enthusiasm, to the demonstrations of her welcome. The old eyes, beneath their slightly drooping lids, missed nothing in their critical glance of the faded "bobbed" hair, the elderly, lined bare neck, the long imitation ear-rings that dangled so mockingly on either side of a face that, never attractive, was now no longer young. As they had tea together Maud's smile seemed to her to be more forced and perpetual than ever. The warmth of her gushing manner filled the elder woman with a sudden repugnance. It was all so pitiably transparent. She didn't want any of them—why couldn't they leave her alone?

After tea she drew her chair with a little shiver nearer to the fire, fixing her melancholy sunken eyes upon its dancing flames and hardly taking the trouble to reply to her niece's chatter. She had been miserably lonely for many years. She was beginning to be quite an old woman now. She would be very, very glad to die when the time came—ah, and that reminded her.

She turned suddenly to her niece, breaking abruptly into the middle of a long grumbling story. "I don't think that you really require much pity," she said. "You chose your husband out of the whole world. Nobody forced you to marry him. I suppose you are fond of each other, but you must have known from the beginning that he was not a wealthy man. You seem to have most

of the things that go to make a woman's life happy—a home, a devoted husband, children—but still you are always unhappy—always grumbling. What is the matter? Would you rather be one of these lonely, bleak women who—well, who do not marry?"

She looked again into the burning heart of the fire, seeming to be, for the moment, oblivious of the hard-eyed woman who sat near her. A sudden dancing tongue of flame, lighting up her thin features, gave her for a moment the appearance of some delicate carving done in ivory.

Mrs. Wickenham hesitated for a moment. "No," she said slowly, at last. "It isn't that exactly. It's the anxiety and—and everything. We seem to be paying for schools all the time and there's simply nothing over for pocket-money. I haven't had a rag fit to wear for years!"

Miss Brindenhurst nodded. "I see," she said, slowly. "But you needn't let all that worry you too much, Maud. I am leaving you each four thousand pounds in my will, but in your case, as you seem to have greater need of money than the others, I have arranged that it should be increased to ten thousand."

Mrs. Wickenham leaned forward in her chair, her hard eyes shining with excitement. "Oh!" she said. "Oh, Auntie!"

Miss Brindenhurst held up an arresting hand. "Wait," she said. "In your case, the money is left upon a certain condition. I wish you to do a very small thing for me, but I want to make quite certain that it *is* done. I have chosen you to do it instead of anyone else because you are my eldest niece, and because, for some things, I prefer relations to outsiders. Wait. I will show you something."

She left the room for a few minutes, returning presently with a flat, oval-shaped Indian box of heavily-carved silver in her hand. She held it lightly against her, almost as though it had been alive, and it seemed to Maud Wickenham as if her aunt's melancholy brown eyes had never before looked quite so sombre and dark.

"This," said Miss Brindenhurst, slowly, "is a box which was given to me many years ago. It holds all that I value upon earth. I do not want it to be separated from me at any time, and what I want you to do—and what I *trust* you to do—is to see that when I die it is laid in the coffin beside me. Never mind the history of the box or what it contains. That does not concern you or anyone else in the world. I hate to think that you should feel a vulgar curiosity about me, and so I will particularly ask you, once for all, not to open the box."

"Oh, Auntie! Of *course* not."

But old Miss Brindenhurst took no notice of the interruption. "What I ask is quite simple," she went on in her calm, level voice. "You quite understand, I suppose, that you are not to open the box? You will place the box, exactly as it is, at my side—my left side—and it will be buried with me in my coffin."

"But, dear Aunt Hilary—you must not talk about dying yet. Why——"

But Miss Brindenhurst waved her aside. "I may be morbid and eccentric," she said, "but I want to have this definitely settled once for all. The box will be in the little safe—with one or two other things which I myself will personally dispose of—and the key will be handed to you by my executors. Will you see that my wishes are exactly carried out?"

Maud Wickenham was filled with excitement. She eyed the box on Miss Brindenhurst's knee searchingly. The workmanship was exquisite. It seemed too shallow to be a jewel-case. Could it possibly be money? Her curiosity was overwhelming. "Of course I will, dear Aunt," she said. "It is just too sweet of you to have thought of remembering me. It seems such a tiny thing to do, though. If there was anything else——"

"There is nothing else as great as this," said the old woman. "It is not locked—there is no lock—but you will remember, I know, that I have particularly asked you *not* to open it. You understand that, don't you? I have made it quite clear?"

She wheeled round abruptly in her chair. Her searching, dark eyes seemed to pierce the younger woman's soul. Maud Wickenham moved uneasily.

"Yes, yes," she said. "I quite understand. But what a pretty box it is! I suppose it is Indian or Burmese. It's rather like a cigar-case, isn't it? I have never seen it before, have I?"

"No," said the other woman, slowly, "you have never seen it before. Now I think I will go and lock it up once more in the safe, and after that, as I am very tired, I am going to lie down for an hour."

And so the women parted: one of them weighing doubtfully the promise that had been made to her, and the other filled with optimistic, rosy plans. Ten thousand pounds wasn't so very much, really—but after all it was possible for it to be everything in the world!

ABOUT a year later old Miss Brindenhurst died suddenly. Her niece, Maud Wickenham, in response to a letter from the executors, went up to London two days before the funeral, going straight to the big house in Lancaster Gate. Everything

was very hushed and quiet. Mr. Beveridge, Miss Brindenhurst's old lawyer, who was also one of the executors, meeting her in the hall, led her at once into the library, shutting the door carefully behind him.

"I am glad you were able to arrange to meet us here this morning, Mrs. Wickenham," he said. "I understand that there was a small personal matter which you were going to arrange for

our late client, Miss Brindenhurst. An entirely personal matter. She told us that she had been careful to give you the most exact instructions regarding her wishes in the matter. I refer, Mrs. Wickenham, to a certain silver box which she has always held in great esteem."

"Yes, I know," interrupted Maud Wickenham, eagerly. "I have seen the box, and I know just what to do with it. My old aunt told me all about it nearly a year ago. It contains hidden treasure. It is to be buried beside her. It is not to be opened." She gave a hard laugh. "I suppose all old people get a bit—queer," she added, after a moment.

There was no reply. Mr. Beveridge had risen from his chair and was re-arranging

"This," said Miss Brindenhurst, slowly, "is a box which was given to me many years ago. It holds all that I value upon earth."

the little procession of brass figures on the mantelpiece with careful exactness—little brass oxen, little brass buddhas, monkeys, and frogs. After a moment he turned to her again, his bushy eyebrows a little drawn together. "It is quite clear that you understood my client's wishes, Mrs. Wickenham," he said, slowly. "Miss Brindenhurst was very anxious as to the exact carrying out of her expressed wishes. She particularly abhorred curiosity in any form——" He broke off abruptly and, taking a sealed-up envelope out of his pocket-book, held it out to her. "In this," he said, "you will find the key of the smaller of the two safes built

into the corner over there. The silver box is inside. This key was sealed up by Miss Brindenhurst herself after a certain interview in which, with my fellow-executor, I saw the box in question. Here is the key, Mrs. Wickenham. And now I must ask you to excuse me for a short time. I shall return in a few minutes with my partner, Mr. Limpsfield, who would also like to see you."

He crossed the room and, going out, shut the door quietly behind him.

For a moment or two Maud Wickenham stood uncertainly where he had left her. The long, gloomy room, with its closely-drawn blinds, was cold and depressing. She noticed that the closed envelope containing the key was sealed with her aunt's seal. She remembered so distinctly how, nearly a year ago, she had sat in the big faded drawing-room upstairs, and how old Miss Brindenhurst had shown her the flat silver box and told her what she was to do with it. She looked once more at the sealed-up key, which lay upon the table. It all seemed very formal and stupid. It was such a ridiculous fuss to make about nothing, but lawyers were always like that—they simply loved making things formal. With a sudden irritable movement she pulled the long thin key out of its envelope and, crossing over to the smaller safe, unlocked it without difficulty. There lay the strange flat silver box, with its heavily-carved elephants and palm trees. She picked it up, admiring the delicate skill of the carving. It did seem rather a pity to bury such a lovely thing. Nobody would ever see it again. It seemed to her more like a man's cigar-case than anything else. What could the thing possibly contain? She remembered her aunt's curious words: "All that I value upon earth." Could it hold trinkets? Or papers? She rattled it, holding it up against her ear, but it was apparently either entirely empty or else tightly packed with something.

AND then a very unfortunate thing happened. In turning the box round, she caught sight of a small raised knob—evidently the spring which opened it. Of course—she remembered now—it wasn't *locked*. After a moment of awful temptation Maud Wickenham fell. What could this treasure be that was going to be buried next to the old woman's heart? She felt that she *must* know.

All at once her faithful promise to the other woman was swept aside. After all, Aunt Brindenhurst was dead and would never know that she had peeped. In a moment she had pressed the spring, and the box was open. It contained nothing of any value—nothing but a man's glove, rather crushed and very much worn. Under the glove were some tattered fragments of a letter beginning, in its faded writing, with "My sweetest darling," and referring to some voyage which the writer was about to make to Demerara to dispose of certain sugar plantations before settling in England.

After a moment of blank, uncomprehending surprise, Maud Wickenham tried to shut the box—tried and tried again. It had opened so very easily—nothing in the world would shut it now.

As she bent over it again, exerting all the strength in both her hands, the door opened and the two lawyers, Mr. Beveridge and his friend, entered the room. Mrs. Wickenham started guiltily. The two men stood just inside the doorway and looked at her.

There was quite a long silence. At last Mr. Beveridge spoke. "Miss Brindenhurst was quite right," he said, slowly. "Look! She has opened the box. This, Mrs. Wickenham," he went on, "is Mr. James Limpsfield, my partner and fellow-executor."

Maud Wickenham bowed. She turned slightly away from them, her nervous hands still endeavouring to shut the box.

And then Mr. Beveridge crossed the room suddenly. "Allow me to relieve you of that," he said, in a harsh voice. "The secret of the spring is known, I think, only to Mr. Limpsfield and myself. Yes, give me the box, please. Thank you. You see, Limpsfield? I will put it back in the safe, I think, in the meantime, and later on it can be put in its final resting-place. Your aunt, Mrs. Wickenham"—he turned to the scarlet-faced woman beside him—"gave you both her confidence and her trust. I did my best to-day, short of telling you the truth, to remind you of her dislike to prying curiosity in any form. She left you a certain legacy—a most generous legacy—on condition that you should carry out a very simple request according to her exact wishes. She was uncertain, however, as to your loyalty in doing so, and for that express purpose she arranged with us both that we should, after giving you the key of the safe, leave you for exactly ten minutes alone with the box. If the box had not been opened within this time we were directed to add a further sum of two thousand pounds to your legacy. If, on the other hand, your curiosity—almost indecent curiosity, madam, I might say—had in that time caused you to betray her trust in you, then, according to a special clause in her will, the sum of money which would have been yours was to be transferred to two of the larger London hospitals. For this reason she explained to us some little time ago the secret mechanism of the box. Without this knowledge it is almost

impossible to shut it again once it has been opened. Its original use, I believe, was supposed to have been the detection of suspected thieves. We see that the box has been opened by you, madam, in direct opposition and disobedience to the expressed wishes of our late client. She has made provision for this disobedience in her will, and so I think that there is nothing else that need be said about it. Any personal comment as to the outrage of your act towards a dead woman would be both unnecessary and impertinent. I can only express the real pleasure I shall have in carrying out the terms of my late client's will."

Mrs. Wickenham looked blankly from one executor to the other. "Then—then—what will become of all my money?" she gasped, at last.

Mr. Beveridge, after replacing the silver box in the smaller of the two safes, closed and locked the door. "After things have been arranged," he said quietly, "the two London hospitals which are going to benefit by—er—the gratification of your curiosity will receive cheques for five thousand pounds each from the estate of the late Miss Hilary Brindenhurst. But I need not detain you any longer, Mrs. Wickenham. I believe the maids have prepared tea for you in the drawing-room. Perhaps, also, you would like to go up and see——"

But Maud Wickenham had risen hurriedly to her feet. "No," she said. "No, thank you. I would rather not have tea. I—I ought to have remembered that she might do something of this kind. She always was a sly, mad old thing. I wonder who the man was, though, and whether he died or jilted her!"

She laughed a little hysterically and then, crossing the room with uneven steps, passed in silence through the door which Mr. Limpsfield held open for her.

# ACROSTICS.

OUR thirty-second series of acrostics begins with No. 153, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 153.

OUR heroine has lost her sheep,
Our heroine fell fast asleep;
When, later on, her flock she found,
Were they in every detail sound?

1. A fleecy, frisking quadruped,
His essays are with pleasure read.
2. Three-fourths of image here we view:
A little sentence write, I do.
3. A knave, if this, a king can beat;
Behead it, and we think of meat.
4. Four-lettered volume would you see,
You merely have to write to me.
5. Better than never, not in time;
Girl, number, fruit, and fish will rhyme.
6. A final letter add, to spell
The continent wherein we dwell.

REMUS.

*Answers to Acrostic No. 153 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on April 10th. They must be written on half-sheets of notepaper, or on cards; at the foot of the solution must appear the solver's pseudonym, which must consist of one word only. Nothing else must be written on the same paper. Flimsy paper should not be used.*

*To every light one alternative answer may be sent, provided that it is written at the side.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 152.

PARENT and child we show you here to-day;
Lawless and stern the parent, so they say:
The child, though pure, full often will deceive
Poor simple folk, too eager to believe.

1. Might have a Latin end, or meaning, though
There'd be no object in it then, you know.
2. Mixture of noise and cash, which, being guessed,
Thoughts of the moon may very well suggest.
3. How many finals does the whole contain?
Remove initial, and the answer's plain.
4. Same as before, our word should come to mind,
Though here it is without a head, we find.
5. Write down this light; now double it: why, see!
The answer is as plain as plain can be.
6. Full many a steamer here comes into sight,
And so, fast following, gives the very light.
7. You don't know this? I'm not surprised, I'm sure!
Less than a dozen often make a score.
8. You may not quite succeed in this to-day,
But if you try to more than once, you may.
9. Part of an institution; 'twould appear
The whole is half what's left; reverse it here.

VIPER.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | N | ominat | I |
| 2. | E | ndymio | N |
| 3. | C | XX | V |
| 4. | E | r | E |
| 5. | S | emi-colo | N |
| 6. | S | olen | T |
| 7. | I | ncognit | I |
| 8. | T | ot | O |
| 9. | Y | ra | N |

NOTES.—Proem. Necessity is the mother of Invention, Necessity knows no law, stern necessity, pure invention. Light 1. Nominative. 2. Din, money. 3. Five times twenty-five. 4. Ere, before; here. 6. One word, and two. 7. Unknown; the cricket club. 8. In toto, entirely. 9. Seminary; semi, half.

# THE PUZZLE KING

## An Interview With

# HENRY E. DUDENEY

By FENN SHERIE

MANY years ago in a certain park a baby boy, discovering that his nurse had temporarily deserted him in favour of an attractive soldier, sat up in his perambulator and endeavoured to propel himself by pressing hard against the hand-rail. When he found that he was unable to make any progress, his little mind was filled with vague wonderings.

"Why wouldn't the pram move?" he asked himself.

That was the genesis of "Perplexities"—the first problem, within recollection, that presented itself to the man who is now the world's greatest puzzle expert, Mr. Henry Ernest Dudeney.

Seated in a cosy arm-chair in his study, a pleasant room in a delightful old-world house that nestles beneath the very walls of the castle ruins at Lewes, I listened with interest whilst Mr. Dudeney, carrying his memory back some sixty-five years or more, traced his propensity for problems to this early incident of his childhood.

"You see," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "the solving of problems is part of our very existence. Perplexities large and small confront us every hour of the day. Every task we undertake, every game we play, has its own little set of puzzles—some of them easy, others apparently insoluble—and our brains are continually grappling with them. If there were no puzzles to solve there would be no questions to ask—and then what a dull world it would be!

"For puzzle-solving is only another name for reasoning; the unfortunate people who cannot solve puzzles have to be sent to lunatic asylums—because, as we say, they have lost their reasoning powers."

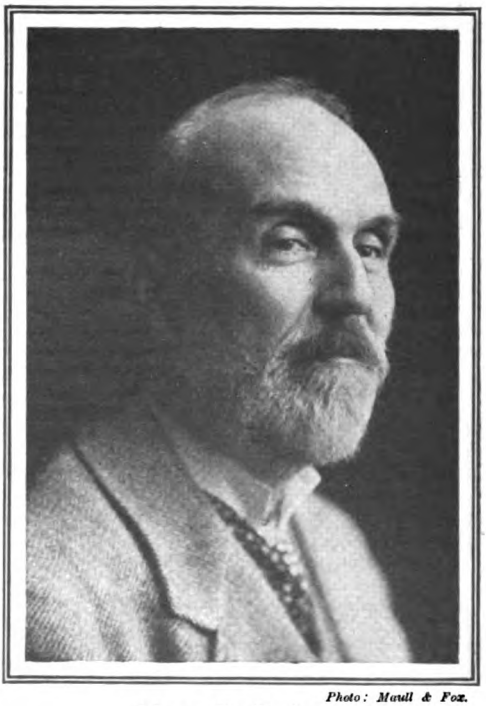


*Photo: Mavill & Fox.*

Henry E. Dudeney.

Mr. Dudeney glanced at me quizzically, like a chess-player who has just made his first move, and then, apparently satisfied that I had grasped the thread of his argument, proceeded.

"Some people imagine that a man who is constantly applying his brain to puzzles and problems must be a crank. On the contrary, puzzle-makers—and puzzle-solvers—must of necessity be clear-thinking, logical people."

Mr. Dudeney certainly speaks with authority, for he has been inventing puzzles and problems for nearly sixty years.

"As I have already explained," he continued, "I have been of an inquiring turn

of mind ever since I can remember, and it is impossible for me to say definitely when I first began to turn my attention to the type of puzzle with which I am concerned to-day. Like most children, I took an interest in all things problematical from a very early age, and 'Why?' and 'How?' were two of the first words in my vocabulary.

"As a youth I took a great interest in mechanical toys and the various puzzle games they sold in the shops. Conjuring tricks—which, after all, are only puzzles of which the performer tries to hide the solution—also fascinated me very considerably.

"I once saw an illusionist perform a 'Vanishing Lady' trick. The lady stood in the centre of the stage. Four attendants came on and erected a kind of tent round her. The illusionist fired a pistol, the tent collapsed, and the lady had apparently vanished into the air.

"I was extremely mystified, and tried to fathom the secret by a process of deduction. The lady could not have escaped through the wall at the back of the tent, I reasoned, for the trick was performed on a bare stage in a local Church Hall. There was no trap-door in the floor. Yet she had left the stage somehow. Then my mathematical mind got to work. How many people were there on the stage at the commencement of the performance? Two; the illusionist and the lady. Four attendants had entered to erect the tent.

"Two plus four equals six. So far, so good.

"Then, in a flash, a possible solution came to me. I went to see the show again and carefully counted the number of attendants who left the stage after the tent had been erected. There were five! The problem was solved."

Mr. Dudeney laughed at the recollection.

"That incident may seem irrelevant, but I mention it to emphasize that the secret of solving problems is to develop the art of 'exact thinking.' Even mathematics—frequently regarded as the schoolboy's terror—can be made extremely fascinating if only the teacher will endeavour to show that its whole foundation is the science of 'exact thinking,' and that dry-as-dust problems can be solved by methods similar to those of Sherlock Holmes, the schoolboy's hero."

Mr. Dudeney took a volume from his bookshelf and handed it to me.

"Here is a little book recently published for use in schools," he said. "The author, a schoolmaster, has succeeded in making mathematics entertaining by serving up every question in the form of a puzzle. You will see that he has included, with permission, many of the brain-teasers which have appeared in my own publications."

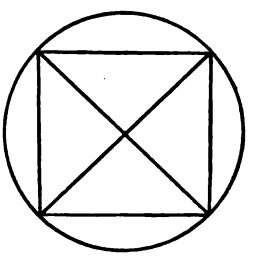
I glanced at the entertaining illustrations and heaved a sigh of regret that I had been born too early to digest my mathematics in such palatable form. I called to mind an occasion when I had endeavoured to institute a "Brighter Euclid" campaign by drawing a donkey on the *Pons Asinorum*—and the punishment which followed. Then, dismissing such painful memories, I returned to the interview.

'When was your first puzzle published?" I asked.

"At the age of nine," Mr. Dudeney replied. "I made up one or two simple little teasers to amuse my brothers and sisters—there were nine of us in the family—and somebody suggested that I should send them to a boys' paper. To my great delight they were accepted, and I received five shillings each for them."

"Can you remember them now?" I asked.

"Yes; here is one."



*Can you draw the figure shown with one stroke of the pencil, never lifting the pencil from the paper or going over a line twice?*

**A problem invented by Mr. Dudeney at the age of nine.**

"I will warn you that it is done by a trick—as you will see when I show you the solution later.

"Curiously enough, this very puzzle was forwarded to me only a few weeks back by a reader of THE STRAND under the impression that it was something new. Of course, my puzzles are always coming home to roost in this fashion. Every time a kindly correspondent discovers a problem that he has not seen before his first thought is to 'send it to Dudeney.' My homing pigeons, as I call them, sometimes return with their wings clipped or their tails twisted, but still I can usually recognize them."

"To return to the days of your boyhood," I said tactfully, "you were telling me——"

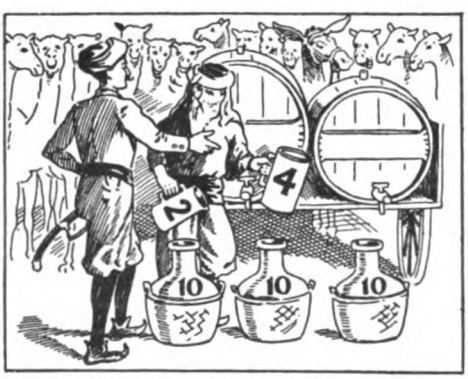
"Oh, yes; about my first contribution. Now please don't imagine for a moment that I was 'puzzle mad' as a youth. I tried my

hand at all sorts of things. My first employment was in the Civil Service, but in my spare time I used to write short stories and articles.

"My journalistic adventures met with fair success, and I soon became a regular contributor to *Tit-Bits*. Indeed, the late Sir George Newnes—with whom, in later years, I developed a close friendship—offered me a post on the staff. I preferred, however, to remain a free-lance."

The puzzle columns which Mr. Dudeney conducted in *Tit-Bits* and other journals under the pseudonym "Sphinx" became so popular that he decided to specialize in this style of work. At that time the late Sam Loyd, the American "Puzzle King," was creating a considerable sensation in the United States, and Mr. Dudeney arranged a kind of international exchange of problems.

One of Loyd's most popular problems was known as his Oriental Puzzle, which was as follows :—




The Oriental Puzzle invented by Sam Loyd, the famous American problemist. By finding the solution of this Mr. Dudeney enabled Loyd to defeat all his competitors.

*An itinerant merchant of Bagdad, just starting on his journey with a hogshead of water and a barrel of honey, was hailed by a messenger from the Caliph, who demanded that three gallons of water be given to each of his thirteen camels. At the same time presenting three ten-gallon bottles, he demanded three gallons of water to be put in the first, three gallons of honey in the second, and three gallons of honey and three of water mixed in the third.*

*The honest merchant, who had only a two-gallon and a four-gallon measure, suspec ing that a trap was being set to catch him giving short measure, resolved to resort to no device or expedient that could convict him of cheating if the quantities should prove inaccurate. He therefore first showed the messenger the seal of the royal inspector of weights and measures upon the hogshead, barrel, and two measures, and then proceeded to deliver the quantities required, handling only the measures and bottles. How did the merchant perform the feat in the most expeditious manner, without throwing away any water or honey ?*

Loyd published this puzzle in America, but was unable to find the best solution himself. Various prizes had been offered for the best, and Loyd, anxious to defeat his competitors, appealed to Mr. Dudeney to help him. Eventually, after a great deal of complex calculation, Mr. Dudeney found the solution and sent it to Loyd, who wrote back to the effect that he had saved him no less a sum than five thousand dollars.

Mr. Dudeney was the pioneer, in Europe, of what has been called the New Puzzledom —the application of scientific mathematical principles to the making of popular problems for mental recreation—and since the death of his American colleague some years back he has remained unchallenged as the King of Puzzlemakers. What is more, he is a monarch who has created his own kingdom, for it is no exaggeration to say that the present popularity of puzzles throughout the world is directly traceable to Mr. Dudeney's skill in devising "brain-teasers" that appeal to all classes.

Although the history of puzzles goes back to ancient times, there is no trace of any man prior to Mr. Dudeney having devoted his life-work to the study of them. Most of the mathematicians who have earned fame as makers of problems have been "one-puzzle men." For instance, Kirkman's reputation as a puzzlist rests upon a single problem, called the "Fifteen Schoolgirls," which is as follows :—

*How could fifteen schoolgirls walk out on seven days in triplets without any girl ever walking twice in a triplet with another girl ?*

And even Kirkman himself, although he found a solution, did not master the general law involved by this problem.

Mr. Dudeney, on the other hand, is never satisfied until he delves to the rock-bottom of every puzzle, and not only has he found the solution to Kirkman's poser, but he has explained the general principle upon which such problems and their solutions are based.

It is not the answer to a problem that interests the "Puzzle King," but the solution—which is quite a different thing; and for this reason his fame amongst the professors of higher mathematics is no less than it is amongst the solvers of popular puzzles.

Thirty years ago nearly all the puzzles published in books and magazines were old favourites which were constantly being "re-hashed" and served up again and again in a new guise. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Mr. Dudeney first announced his intention to confine himself to the invention of new problems he was laughed at.

"People said that there was nothing new under the sun," he told me, "and they prophesied that my source of ideas would run dry within a few months. But their arguments were almost as futile as the old contention that because there are only eight notes in the octave there are no new melodies to be found."

That Mr. Dudeney has undoubtedly confounded his critics is evident from his contributions to THE STRAND MAGAZINE alone. His first puzzle article in these pages appeared thirty years ago, and his popular "Perplexities" feature has run without a break for sixteen years.

By the way, Mr. Dudeney, who is now sixty-nine, draws all his own diagrams. In the course of his long career he has worked out his problems whilst travelling abroad, whilst lying seriously ill in bed, and upon one occasion, when he had the misfortune to break his right arm, he even succeeded in carrying on his writing and drawing with the left hand.

I asked him to explain how his popular problems are devised.

"More often than not," he said, "I discover a mathematical principle which interests me, and then I wait until I can think out a means of dressing it up so that it will appeal to the general public.

"For instance, has it ever occurred to you that if it were possible to remove the hub of a wheel and continue the spokes to the centre a little problem would present itself?"

I said that it had not.

"What do you think would happen?" he asked.

"I suppose they would all meet," I replied.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Dudeney, "wherever any two spokes met they would form a barrier which would prevent any other spokes meeting on the same plane. Perhaps I can explain the principle more clearly by setting you a simple little problem."

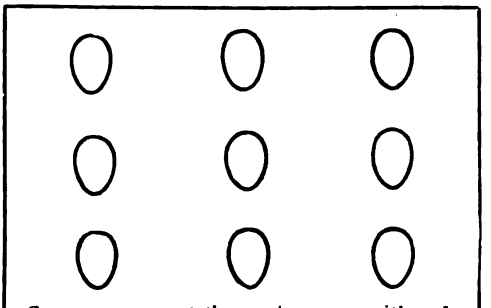
This was the problem:—

*Take six cigarettes and try to place them together so that each cigarette touches the other five.*

I did my best to solve the little teaser, but had to admit defeat. Mr. Dudeney promised to show me the solution at the conclusion of our interview.

"Of course, it is not always an easy matter to word a problem clearly and concisely so that the conditions shall allow no opportunities for quibbling," he continued. "Some puzzles are propounded purposely to trap the unwary, and quite naturally people are apt to seek loopholes in every teaser they attempt to solve. I remember once that, after wording a puzzle with extreme care to make sure that there could be no possible quibble, I received a most amusing solution. It was the old 'egg' problem in which nine points had to be connected, using 'the fewest possible straight lines.' A reader claimed to have solved it by drawing a single straight line—pointing out that he had fulfilled the conditions by making all the rest of the lines crooked!

"Here is the diagram in case you may like to try it.



*Can you connect these nine eggs with only four straight lines?*

**The popular "Columbus' Egg" Puzzle.**

"And everybody knows the story of the man who attempted to work out the old puzzle which starts, 'If a herring and a half cost three-halfpence . . . .' When he gave it up and was told the solution, he made the excuse that he had misunderstood the question and had been trying to work it out in haddocks!"

"You referred just now to puzzles which had a 'catch' in them," I said. "Do you consider that such problems may be regarded as legitimate puzzles?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Dudeney. "They

all constitute valuable tests in the art of exact thinking. Here is an example" :—

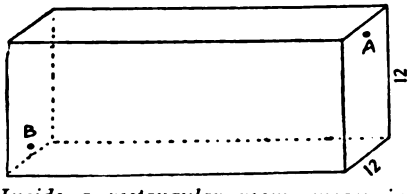
*A lady was seated in her private chamber when her son entered. Upon receiving the parental command, "Depart, my son, and do not disturb me," he replied: "I am of a truth thy son; but thou art not my mother, and until thou hast shown me how this may be I shall not go forth."*

Mr. Dudeney smiled at my expression of perplexity.

"Don't bother about the solution now," he said; "I'll tell it to you presently."

"What do you consider your most popular problem?" I asked, renewing the assault.

"The one which I call 'The Spider and the Fly,'" Mr. Dudeney replied. "Here it is." And he showed me the following diagram:—




*Inside a rectangular room, measuring thirty feet in length and twelve feet in width and height, a spider is at a point in the middle of one of the end walls, one foot from the ceiling, as at A; and a fly is on the opposite wall, one foot from the floor in the centre, as shown at B. What is the shortest distance that the spider must crawl in order to reach the fly, which remains stationary? Of course, the spider never drops or uses its web, but crawls fairly.*

**"The Spider and the Fly," Mr. Dudeney's most popular "Perplexity," which came to him in an idle moment whilst he was staring at the ceiling.**

"The idea for that problem came to me in an idle moment whilst I sat in my chair smoking and gazing at the ceiling," Mr. Dudeney explained. "And, strangely enough, the method of solving it occurred to me almost as soon as I had conceived the puzzle itself. I was rather surprised, therefore, to find that it gave rise to a great deal of discussion and controversy when it was first published. When I show you the solution presently you will see that it may be obtained by a comparatively simple process of deduction."

"Talking of deduction," I said, "have you ever applied your experience as a problemist to the solution of murder mysteries or the examination of evidence in criminal trials?"

"I was once asked by a Press crime investigator—he used to call himself a *criminal* investigator, but I prefer to believe him innocent!—to decipher a code message which the police had found in the possession of an accused prisoner, and which the authorities had failed to unravel."

"And did you succeed?"

"Oh, yes; I managed it after a few hours' work. But it was never brought up in court, because the police had sufficient evidence to convict without resorting to it.

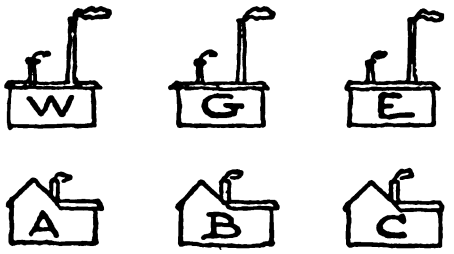
"Talking of codes," Mr. Dudeney continued, "I once saw a code message in the 'Agony Column' of a newspaper and, just for fun, tried my hand at deciphering it. It turned out to be a message from a man to a girl, asking her to meet him, and urging her not to let her parents know. So the following day I inserted in the paper a message in the same code saying, 'Do not trust him. He means you no good. Well-Wisher.' Sure enough, some time later another code message appeared thanking me for my good advice."

"I suppose you have a large circle of correspondents?" I suggested.

"Oh, yes. I receive so many letters daily from all parts of the world that I cannot possibly answer them all. If I were to attempt to do so I should have no time for anything else. Still, I always try to reply to as many as possible.

"During the war I used to get shoals of letters from the men in the trenches, in billets, and in hospitals. They were always asking me to settle wagers on various puzzles—a particularly persistent chestnut being the old argument, 'If a monkey is tied to a post and a man walks round the post in a complete circle, and the monkey turns so that it faces the man all the while, does the man go round the monkey?' It is as well to refuse to answer this question until the interrogator gives a clear definition of what he means by the words 'go round.'

"Again, I receive a remarkable number of letters asking for a solution of the old problem, 'Water, Gas, and Electricity.' This puzzle is older than electricity, or even gas, but since it has been dished up in this new form it seems to have enjoyed a fresh lease of life. I receive, on an average, three or four letters a week asking for the solution, so you may perhaps care to publish it again.




*The puzzle is to lay on water, gas, and electricity, from W, G, and E, to each of the three houses, A, B, and C, without any pipe crossing another.*

**"Water, Gas, and Electricity," a puzzle which has brought Mr. Dudeney an average of three or four letters weekly for several years.**

"As I was saying, quite a large proportion of the letters I receive come from hospitals. On one occasion I received a letter from a Medical Officer explaining that one of his patients, a wounded man, was suffering from insomnia because he could not work out the solution to one of my problems, and he begged me to forward it to him secretly so that he (the M.O.) could pretend to help the poor fellow to solve it. I did as requested, and had the satisfaction of hearing that the ruse worked successfully. I have since wondered whether the Medical Officer has found any difficulty in living up to his false reputation as a problemist!

"Talking of correspondence—this may sound like fiction, but I can assure you that it is perfectly true—I once received a letter from a poor woman in which she expressed her heartfelt thanks to me because my problems had afforded her husband a new pastime which, by keeping him at home in the evenings, had actually cured him of drunkenness."

"Do you ever publish problems of which you yourself do not know the solution?" I asked.

"Not often," replied Mr. Dudeney. "I remember one, however, which baffled me for a long time. It was not unlike the 'Fifteen Schoolgirls' puzzle to which I have already referred.

*"Seat thirteen people round a table on sixty-six occasions so that no person should have the same two neighbours twice.*

"I tried to worry that out for several months, but without success. Then one evening, whilst at the Opera listening to a performance of 'Siegfried,' a possible method of solution flashed into my head. I made a rough note on the margin of my programme, and the following morning I set to work and found it gave the solution.

"One night I actually dreamed the solution of a puzzle which had worried me for a considerable time. I sat up in bed, lit the candle, found a pencil, and jotted down a few notes on the fly-leaf of a book I had been reading. When I examined the result in the morning the solution was perfectly correct. I have since found answers to many other problems in my sleep, but upon examination in the cold light of dawn they have nearly always turned out to be absurdly wrong."

"Regarding the process of 'exact thinking' to which you have referred," I asked, "can you explain by a simple example how this may be applied?"

"Certainly. For instance, I have heard people argue for hours upon end over the old conundrum, 'Brother and sister have I none, but that man's father is my father's son.' By 'exact thinking' it is easy enough to see that 'my father's son' is either myself or my brother. But as it is clearly stated that I have no brother, it must refer to myself. The problem, simplified, now becomes, 'That man's father is myself.' Obviously 'that man' is my son. It seems simple enough, but there are still thousands of people who are unable to solve it clearly because they will not grasp the fundamentals."

"And now will you give me the solutions to some of the brain-teasers you have shown me in the course of our chat?" I asked.

Mr. Dudeney took up a pencil and paper and bade me sit beside him at the table.

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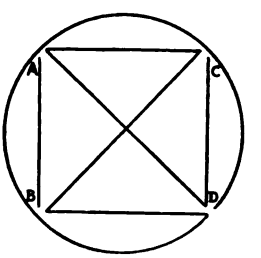
## SOLUTIONS.

"Let me see," he commenced, "the first problem—the one I invented as a boy—was to draw this figure without lifting the pencil from the paper.

"I mentioned that it was done by a trick. The trick is to fold the paper. Then, by inserting the point of the pencil in the fold, two straight lines, A B and C D, can be drawn in one stroke. Now straighten out the paper without moving the point of the pencil from D, and the figure may be completed in the single stroke.



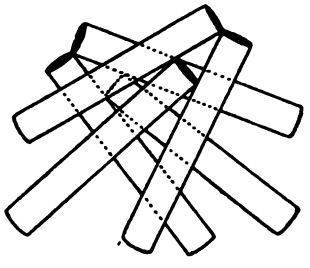
" Loyd's Oriental Puzzle is rather too complicated for me to explain just now. It may interest you to know that the answer I first gave involved 521 manipulations—that is, pouring from vessel to vessel—but I afterwards reduced this to 506, which result enabled Loyd to defeat all his competitors.

" Kirkman's ' Fifteen Schoolgirls ' puzzle is solved as follows. Give the girls the numbers 1 to 15 and they can be grouped in this manner for the seven days :—

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st day | 15 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| 2nd day | 15 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 12 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| 3rd day | 15 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 14 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 13 |
| 4th day | 15 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 11 | 1 |
| 5th day | 15 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 3 |
| 6th day | 15 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 14 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 5 |
| 7th day | 15 | 13 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 7 |

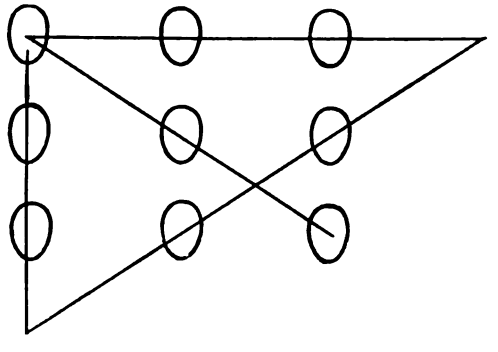
Note the way that the odd numbers and the even numbers descend cyclically.

" Now for the cigarette puzzle. You discovered at the first attempt how three cigarettes could be placed together so that each touched the other two. What could be easier, therefore, than to arrange the other three cigarettes in a similar fashion and place them transversely across the first three ? "



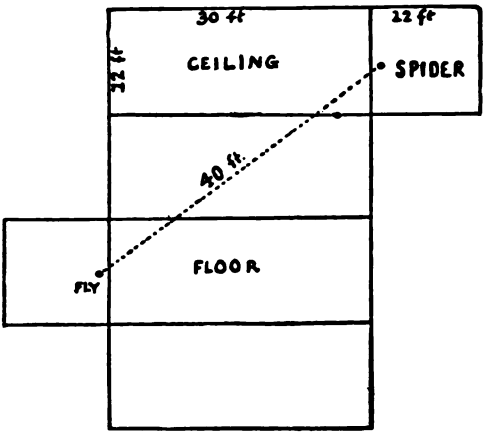
I kicked myself for not having seen the solution before, and then turned to the " egg " problem.

" This is equally simple," said Mr. Dudeney. The nine eggs can be connected by four straight lines, thus :—

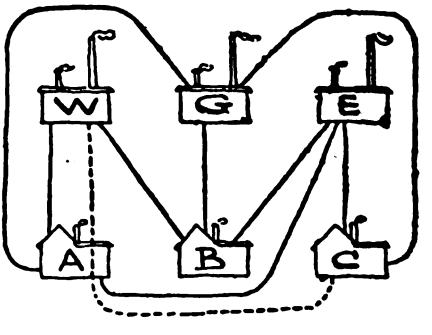


" The ' catch ' in the puzzle concerning the youth who received the parental command, ' Depart, my son,' is simply that the command came from his father, who also happened to be present.

" To solve the puzzle of the spider and the fly, imagine the room to be a cardboard box. Then the box may be cut in various different ways so that the cardboard may be laid flat upon the table. If you cut it as shown in the diagram and take the shortest route between the spider and the fly, as indicated by the dotted line, you will find that the distance is exactly forty feet. It will be seen that the spider actually passes over five of the six sides of the room.




" Now for the ' Water, Gas, and Electricity ' teaser. According to the conditions, in the strict sense in which one at first understands them, there is no possible solution. In such a dilemma always look for some verbal quibble or trick. If the owner of the house A will allow the water company to run their pipe for house C through his property (and we are not bound to assume that he would object) the problem may be solved as shown in the diagram.




" I do not propose to show you the solution of the puzzle about the thirteen people round a table, because it would be far too complicated.

" Besides," Mr. Dudeney added, with a glance at the clock, " you have a train to catch."

# "FIRE!"

By

## C. C. ANDREWS

*ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT*

DUCANE, as the sound struck upon his ear, started and stared about him with a sudden confused alertness. Lulled by the steady thud of the mare's hoofs, by the droning monotone of insect life that drummed in the dry, pulsating air, by the brazen heat in which, although the day was young, the whole forest lay scorched and parching, he had fallen as nearly asleep as a man in the saddle may. It came again—a succession of shrill yaps, a sharp howl. The track turned the shoulder of a great rock; beside it, caught in a thorn-bush a few yards ahead, something white and brown writhed and struggled, helplessly trapped and held in the needle-like spikes—a dog. Long-legged, long-coated, not grown out of puppyhood, anything in the way of a cross that had, probably, a preponderance of spaniel in it.

All of which he saw in the act of hastily dismounting and going down on his knee. To break the thorns away was not easy, but it was done at the expense of a scratch or two more or less ugly; he stood up with the panting creature held under his arm. How had it come there? His eyes, as he asked himself the question, glanced ahead. To the left ran the forest road that was his own way; to the right wound a track that was not much more than a path. He nodded towards it.

"The old Craven place," he said aloud. "That's the nearest, and I did hear the new folks were in a week ago. Strayed from there, I reckon. That so, ye little fool?"

The puppy, responding, struggled up and licked him in a lavish ecstasy of gratitude. Ducane's handsome, lean, tanned face—a face in which, despite its habitual gravity, there still lurked something boyish—relaxed into a smile; he had a weakness for animals; his mare, a beautiful, clean-bred, spirited creature, was his pride and idol. To abandon the helpless canine infant to its own devices was a thing not to be done. With it still squirming under his arm he swung himself into the saddle.

"Bit too used-up to run," he soliloquized aloud again. "Won't hinder but an hour or so, and it's pretty early yet, thanks to me starting when I did. Reckon I'll be along soon as I need be. Whew, but it's hot!"

The mare turned into the track to the right; once more the thud of her hoofs and the insect drone mingled drowsily. Little by little the way widened, the trees thinned; more and more unbearably the furnace-like heat beat down. Came presently a broad clearing, the cracked earth patched with clumps of coarse sun-scorched scrub and grass. Beyond the road flanking it, backed by a rocky timber-crowned knoll, surrounded by a great yard, showed the old Craven place, a substantial white house with a deep veranda running round it. A large, shirt-sleeved figure appeared from a doorway as Ducane, riding in through the open gate, dismounted in the welcome shade of a laden apple tree and let the puppy slip down.

"Your dog, I think?" he said, questioningly. "Reckoned so, this being the nearest place. Found him caught good and tight in a thorn-bush way back in the woods, and——"

He stopped. His one step back was the mere involuntary recoil of the muscles with

which the conscious will has nothing to do, was as little under control as his swift intake of breath. As swiftly the hand that had dropped to his hip pocket was flung out, empty. He looked at the revolver that, a bare yard away, covered his heart.

"I carry my gun, mostly," he said, levelly. "It happens not, to-day. You've got me, Dave."

The other advanced half a pace.

"When you an' me parted," he said, with grim slowness, "I told you you'd best be spry over pulling on me if you came in my way again, for I'd plug you on sight, sure as my name was Dave Hallard. If it was ten years. If you kept out of it that long, well and good. Ten years! I miss my guess, Jim Ducane, if it's more than five."

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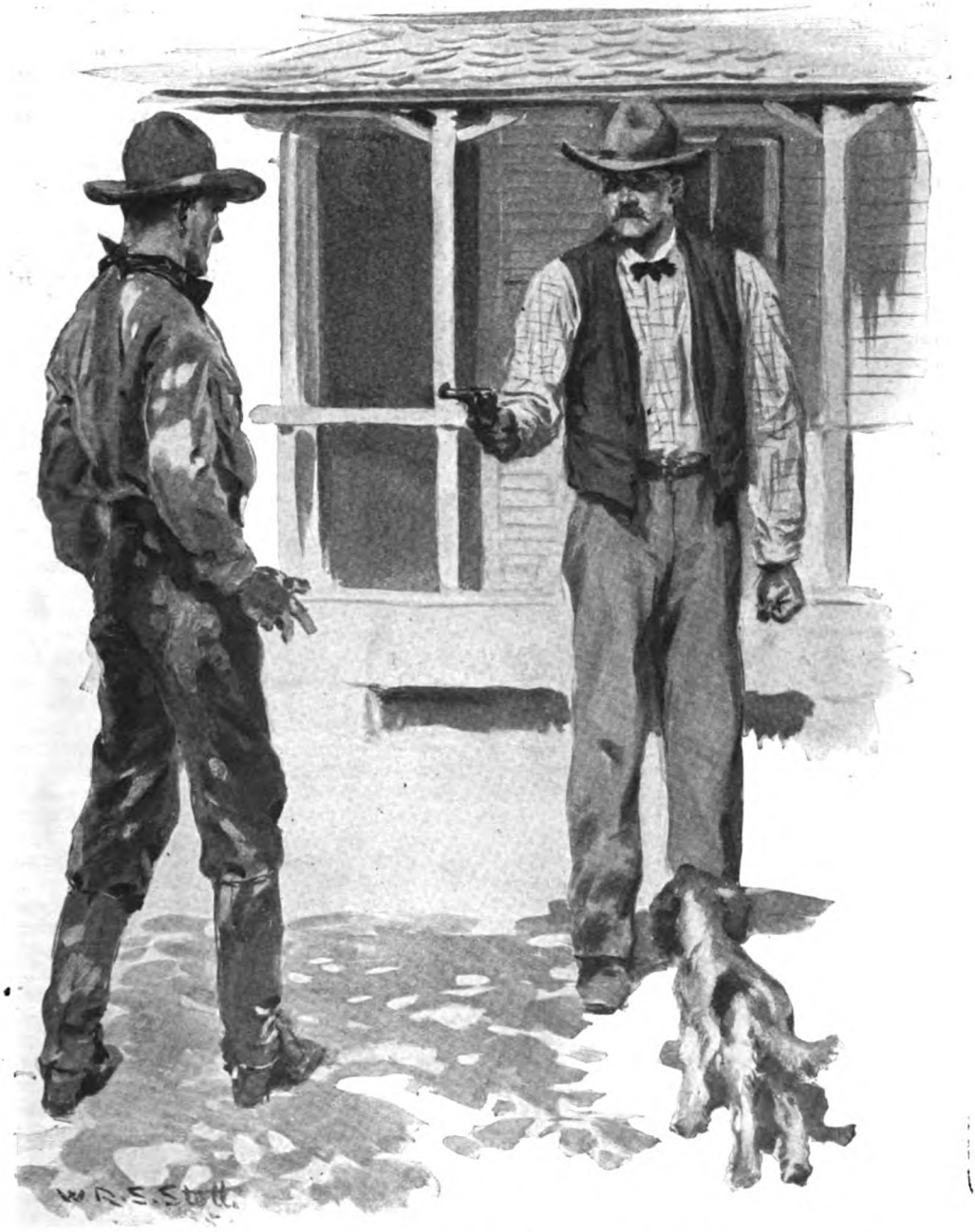

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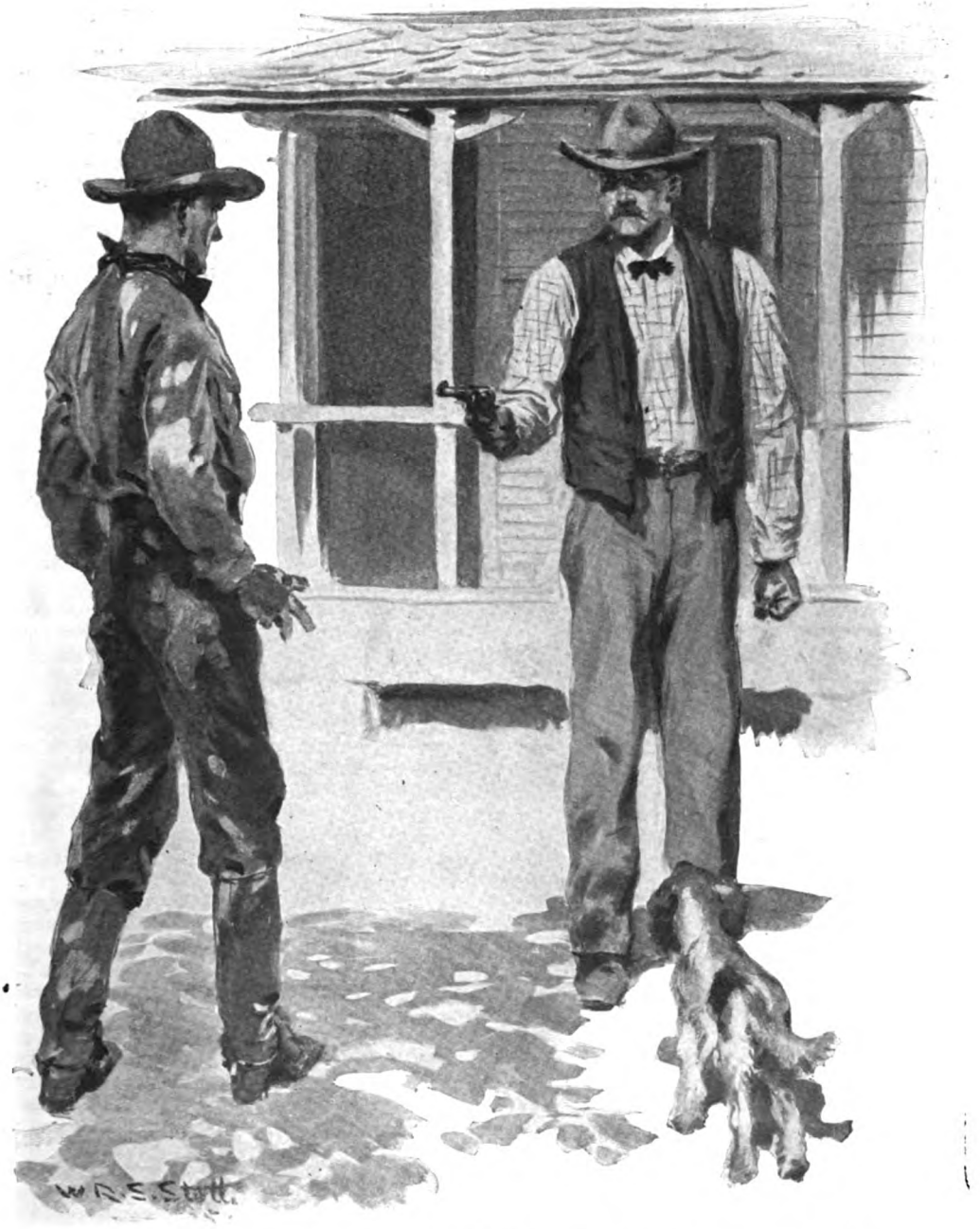

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before the figure that, cowering, panting, against a great boulder, sprang up with a cry, and rushed to and clutched him.

"Saw your pony," said Ducane, rapidly. "Came out just ahead of me on the Long Branch road. Reckoned you must have fallen or that he'd thrown you——"

"He did. I mean, he plunged and I sort of lost the stirrup and slipped—I don't just know how it was. I tried to catch him and couldn't," gasped the girl breathlessly. "I was riding from Arosa Creek——"

"I guessed that was likely it——"

"To the rail-head, to take the cars——"

"The rail-head?" He had thrown an arm about her, was looking down into her great dilated hazel eyes, the terrified, childish round of her little blanched face under a disordered toss of short chestnut hair. "The rail-head? This is the wrong road. If you turned left, coming through the pear——"

"I must have. The track twists so, and I never rode through it alone before. Maybe I oughtn't, but——"

"By yourself? I guess not!"

"But the man that was going to drive me had a fall and got hurt. I didn't want to wait the night over, so they offered me the pony—I reckoned I'd find my way all right. It was just when I'd begun to think I'd maybe come wrong that I smelt the fire. And then saw it. And the pony reared up and plunged—I hurt his mouth, perhaps. What'll I do? They were saying last night that if the forest got alight it would burn for miles. Miles! If I can't get back——"

"You'll get back. Don't be scared—he won't hurt," said Ducane, soothingly.

She had screamed and clung to him. A great ground-snake, writhing rapidly by, had almost touched their feet. Over their heads a flight of birds passed with shrill outcries and a desperate beating of wings. Above and below them, across the track, dark shapes darted from underbrush to underbrush and were gone—terror-driven, the wild things fled before the coming of the fire. Ducane sprang into the saddle and caught the girl up before him. Arosa Creek was the nearest. To get her through the pear was the shortest road to and the best chance of safety—if the wind did not veer.

He looked at her; in the clasp of his arm her small slender body seemed hardly more than a child's.

"I'll get you through," he said, cheerfully. "Don't be afraid of that. The fire's 'way off yet, and it's not so far."

SHE nodded, slipping a hand to his shoulder and holding it. He turned the mare's head, with voice and knee urged her to the best pace that might be. That it could not be her best he knew—for all her blood and courage she was a delicate light-built creature, up to no more than his own weight. But she could make the flat, get through the flat, if—— The road took a deep inward curve; a break in the timber showed the puffs of vapour swollen to clouds rolling tree-top high, showed the darting spires of red fanned to widening banners of flame; the fire was spreading with frightful velocity. If it should have reached the pear, if they had to turn back—— Ducane, with an icy pringle along his spine that chilled his racing blood, glanced down at the girl. She sat shrinking against him, her head down, one hand twisted and clenched in the mare's mane as fast as the other gripped his shoulder, had not seen, it seemed. The road curved outward, stretched in a long sweep, turned sharply again, and the pear was close ahead. Ducane reined in; the cry of both came together. The fire had reached it; almost half of the mile-wide belt was alight; the tinder-dry mass of scorched cacti, overhung by a billowing canopy of smoke, crackled and blazed fiercely, a very inferno. The girl cried out again:—

"We can't get through!" She clutched him, her face panic-stricken. "Can we? Can we?"

"No, we sure can't. It's 'most reached the track now. Wind has veered, I reckon. We must go back," said Ducane.

"Back? The way we came? But where the road curves in the fire was coming close when we passed——"

"I didn't know you saw." He felt the trembling of her against him as her terrified hold tightened. "Yes, pretty close. But it's the only way. If we can make out to get through far as the Long Branch road—we've got to do it! Hold on to me and don't get scared," said Ducane.

And again the mare was flying. The turn was passed. The long stretch was passed. The outward curve was behind them, the inward curve before. And the fire had reached the edge of the track, was licking over the dried grass; the underbrush blazed, driving before it spark-spangled volumes of smoke. . . . A great darting tongue of flame caught at her blown skirt and set it flaming—she screamed and he crushed it out with his hand. . . . The mare was weakening, was failing in her stride, with stretched neck, heaving flanks, foam-dropping nostrils. But the curve was behind them. Ducane flung himself out of the saddle.

"She can't do it," he said, hoarsely. "Not with both of us. She'll go till she drops, breaks her heart, but she's been all of thirty miles since morning already.

If I shorten the stirrup this side you can manage to hold on if I lead her and run by you?" He was hurriedly doing as he said; she had nodded dumbly. "It means going slower, but I'm pretty spry on my feet. We'd best strike the track your pony took—that's the nearest cut to the Long Branch road. Ready? Gentle for a while and let her get her wind. I reckon we're through the worst of it, anyway."

She nodded again, easily, it seemed, accepting the lie. The lie, for he guessed that the track when reached might prove impassable. As it did—half-way through its windings smoke and flame drove them back. A great branch, dead and rotten, caught by the fire, crashed down blazing as they turned and, barely missing the girl, sent Ducane, half stunned, to his knees, with clothes smouldering and blood trickling from a cut on his head. Back on the wide track he found himself reeling sickly and stopped, meeting the dilated eyes that shone black in the pallor of the small face that was like a child's under the short loose toss of hair.

"That—hasn't made me feel any too good," he said, thickly. "If I drop presently, you go on. On! Understand? If you don't, if you wait, it means that you go too—you an' the mare. And don't help me any. Keep right ahead, fast as you can, till you come to a big rock. Then follow the track round it to the right. That'll bring you out on a clearing 'most opposite the nearest house. Go there—they know the mare. And it's safe because of the clearing. Round by the rock and to the right. Got that? Sure? I'll keep up if I can. We—we'll get through—don't you be scared."

THEY went on. Ducane, running with violently pumping heart, bursting lungs, and dizzily-swimming head, kept on his feet only by sheer force of will, knew dazedly that more than once, as he lurched and staggered, only her swift clutch at his shoulder saved him from going down. Half choked by smoke, with clothing scorched in a dozen places by flaming fragments that fell about them, but ahead still of the following fire, they were close upon the rock when he tripped, stumbled, tried to recover, failed, fell, and struggled, gasping, up on elbow and knee.

"Go on! Go on! You've got to. That's the rock——"

"I can't—I can't!" She had screamed and slipped from the saddle—the mare stood with hanging head and spread fore-feet, but, true to her training, still. "I can't—I won't! How'd I bear to live if I left you, when I'd be dead now, suffocated first and burnt up after, if you hadn't come? You'll be all right if you wait a little—just a little—to get your breath. Try to stand. Let me help you. Try—try!" On her knees, desperately striving to raise his inert weight, she caught instinctively at the right plea to rouse and stir him. "And I daren't—I'm scared. I'd go wrong—be killed after all. Ah, you can! You see—you can! There—there! Oh! look!" she gasped.

"Look?" He was on his feet, holding to the mare's shoulder and her arm. She pulled away and threw up her hands.

"Yes—look, look! At the smoke. It's blowing back! Back! And the fire—the fire! Blowing away from us. The wind—the wind's changed! We're through—we're through!" she cried hysterically.

He caught her as she swayed towards him. With her in his arms, insensible, reeled back against the rock. . . . The rock! Hallard! The revolver in his hip pocket! For the first time since his first glimpse of the fire full memory swept in upon him. The smoke canopy, rolling back before the changed and strengthening wind, showed beyond it a glowing stretch of western sky in which a vast coppery ball dipped out of sight. Sundown!

He began to laugh weakly.

Hallard, turning a corner of the old Craven house, checked to stare astoundedly at the figures that passed through the open gate into the yard. Ducane, stumbling from the saddle with the girl's body in his arms, lurched forward a few paces dazedly. To him the other loomed gigantic in a mist of smoke and flame.

"She's not hurt," he said, indistinctly. "Not hurt. It's—it's a faint. You'd best look to her. And the mare. I was on time at the rock all right, but—but——"

Hallard caught the girl as she slid from his hold—he pitched headlong and rolled and lay.

DUCANE, stirring, vaguely conscious of a dully throbbing head, slowly opened his eyes, slowly looked about him. He was lying on a lounge under a window. The room, lamp-lighted, was the room where—— There was an exclamation and a rustle of movement as he stirred again, and the girl was bending over him.

"Don't move—it's best not. I guess you've been asleep—I was getting 'most frightened, it seemed so long. Your head's been bathed and strapped—it won't be so very bad. Does it hurt much?" she asked anxiously.

"My head? No—no." He stared at her, realizing, remembering. "You didn't get hurt? Did you? Were you?"

"Me? Not a mite." She laughed softly; her little face under its shining toss of hair was pink and sweet and charming as a flower. "It was real silly of me to faint off like that—I never did before. But I was awful scared—never thought we'd get through. I don't want to think of it—if you hadn't come! I don't see how ever you made out to lift me and get me here the way you were! No, I wasn't hurt any. And the mare won't be a mite the worse either, Uncle Dave says. He just went out to look at her again——

"Uncle?" Ducane struggled up. "You don't say you're his niece—Dave Hallard's—you——?"

"Sure I am." She nodded. "He said he knows you—didn't he ever say he had one? My mother was his sister—that's how I'm Lily Trevor, not Hallard. I'm going to live with him. That's why—what's the matter? I don't see why you want to laugh, Mr. Ducane!"

She stared, half-indignant, bewildered. Ducane, suddenly on his feet, swaying dizzily, sank back again.

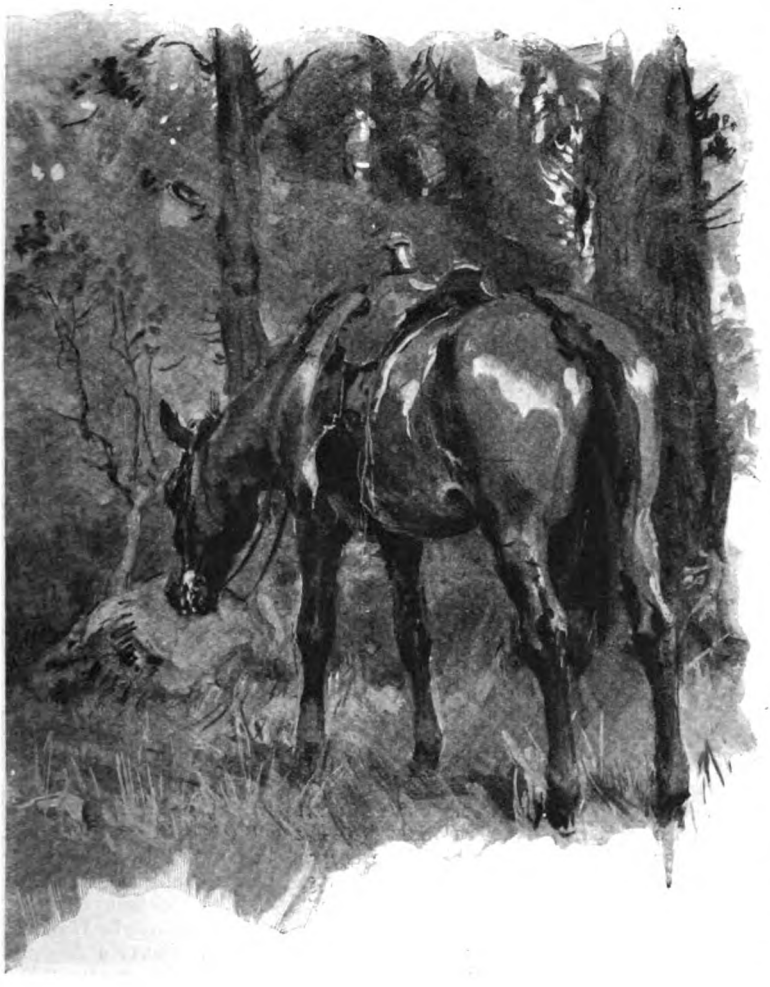
"That's right," he said steadily. "I don't see why I want to laugh either. I beg your pardon, Miss—Miss Lily. I didn't know—that's all. You were coming here then, maybe, when——"

"Yes." Instantly softening, she repeated the little nod. "He wanted for me to stay where I was boarding till he got things fixed.

"You'll be all right if you wait a little—just a little—to get your breath. Try to stand. Let me help you. Try—try!"

As if a man ever did that right without being helped! Why, you're real babies, mostly, if there isn't somebody around to see after you. Anyway, Uncle Dave is—I guess I'll have this room looking some different by

to-morrow night—you'll see! I found I could get to the cars quite easy from Arosa Creek, so I planned to come and take him



by surprise. I didn't know a bit when you told me where to go that it was this place—I'd never been here."

"Didn't you? . . . I'm mighty glad I happened along in time and that you didn't get hurt. I'll be going now," said Ducane, quietly.

"Going?" She came quickly in his way as he stood up. "Why, you can't! You've got to stay the night over—I said so to Uncle Dave. And the mare isn't fit——"

"I don't need the mare. Good night."

"And you're not fit either!" She shook her head impatiently, refusing his extended hand. "Why, there—you can't hardly stand! And to try to go walking—I don't know where you were riding, but if it can't wait till to-morrow, anyway——"

"No, it can't. I've got—got an appointment. It was for sundown, but that don't signify, seeing the reason I didn't keep it. I'll be going," repeted Ducane, doggedly.

"An appointment? Why, where? If it isn't quite near you'll sure never get—— Uncle Dave, here's Mr. Ducane saying he's got some old appointment, and must go off to keep it right now. I call that real foolish when he isn't fit to do anything but just rest. Don't you say so?"

She had turned towards the opening door and Hallard's massive entering figure. Over her head, as he let it close behind him, his eyes and Ducane's met with no more expression than they had shown some ten hours before.

"If Mr. Ducane's got an appointment I reckon he's going to keep it," he drawled, stolidly. "Said you wanted to look at the mare now she's bedded down, didn't you, honey? Best go now, before it gets darker."

"Yes, I sure do." He had crossed to the bureau against the wall; she looked from one to the other with her forehead puckered perplexedly. "But, Uncle Dave, tell him he just can't go. And—and—say, you

haven't said as much as a 'thank you' to him for getting me through that awful fire yet ! "

" Reckon if you've done it he don't want to hear me do it none," returned Hallard as before.

" Oh, I don't believe I have ! " cried Lily. Her thoughts were diverted ; she turned quickly—her glance, her little soft, shy, sleeve-stroking gesture, were like a caress. " But I don't need to just say things, do I, Mr. Ducane ? Won't you come, too, and look at the mare ? Maybe she wants to see you, and you can get across the yard easy enough. You'll let me really ride her some day, won't you ? Come along. And tell him—bother that old appointment, Uncle Dave ! "

SHE ran out. Ducane got unsteadily upon his feet.

" I'd like to see the mare's all right. It won't take but a few minutes, and it's past sundown, anyway," he began. Hallard looked round.

" Speaking o' that appointment——" he drawled again. Ducane, straightening, turned upon him.

" I'm keeping it," he retorted brusquely. " If you think because—because of anything, I'm squealing, backing down, any more than you would——"

Hallard waved a huge hand.

" Me having raised you," he said, remonstrantly, " I opinion that there don't appear much call for that remark. The boy that was the spunkiest little cuss in Texas before he was twelve ain't going to pan out any different when he's six-an'-twenty. Speaking o' that, and the little game o' cards, I was going to offer the idea that we might agree to take the last hand as a sort of a kind of a draw, so to speak. Leaving us equal an' no favour either way. Such meeting my views if it should meet yours." Ducane made a quick step forward and stopped, reddening to his hair and paling again. He cleared his throat.

" Reckon we might," he said slowly. " If you say so, Dave."

Hallard nodded. Absentmindedly, it seemed, he held out his left hand. Ducane placed the revolver in it. Hallard laid it on the table. With the same air of detached abstraction he held out his right hand—both winced under the force of a grip equally crushing. Lily spoke from outside the door.

" You coming, Mr. Ducane ? " she called. Ducane, turning towards it, turned back.

" I want to say," he said a trifle huskily, " that if, five years ago, there was a quarrel because a young fool that reckoned he was almighty smart riled up a man he thought as much of, with reason, as if he'd been his own father, he could have kicked himself five minutes after, and would have felt the same if things hadn't gone the way they did go. And that he's only been sorry once, and that's all the time. If I'd carried my gun this morning and been quicker pulling it than you, I'd likely have put another bullet through myself before now, and been glad to do it."

Hallard stared at the window.

" Supposing," he said, reflectively, " supposing there had been such as you mention, because through getting struck foolish over a widder that shook him after, thanks be, and I have heard makes her second venture hustle around mighty lively !—supposing, on account o' that, a sixteen-stone man o' fifty-two didn't know any better than to get rigging himself up in a jay-blue suit an' a pink shirt an' yaller shoes, and a boy that was all the son he'd ever had or wanted laughed fit to kill and reckoned he took himself for a cross between a Broadway dude an' a fancy poll-parrot, seems to me his rarin' up an' cussin' an' spitting like a tarnation wild-cat made him the biggest fool o' the two. By several miles ! Supposing it was so." He rumbled a deep-chested chuckle, turning. " I got that set o' duds now, Jim ! "

" That so ? " asked Ducane.

" Sure. Haven't wore 'em since, though." With hands on the other's shoulders, he swayed him gently to and fro. " An' you an' me cuttin' up, cuttin' loose over 'em ! Us, that was as good as father an' son, let alone bein' pardners. Lordy Lord ! That reminds me—I reckon it takes two to run this place the way it ought to be."

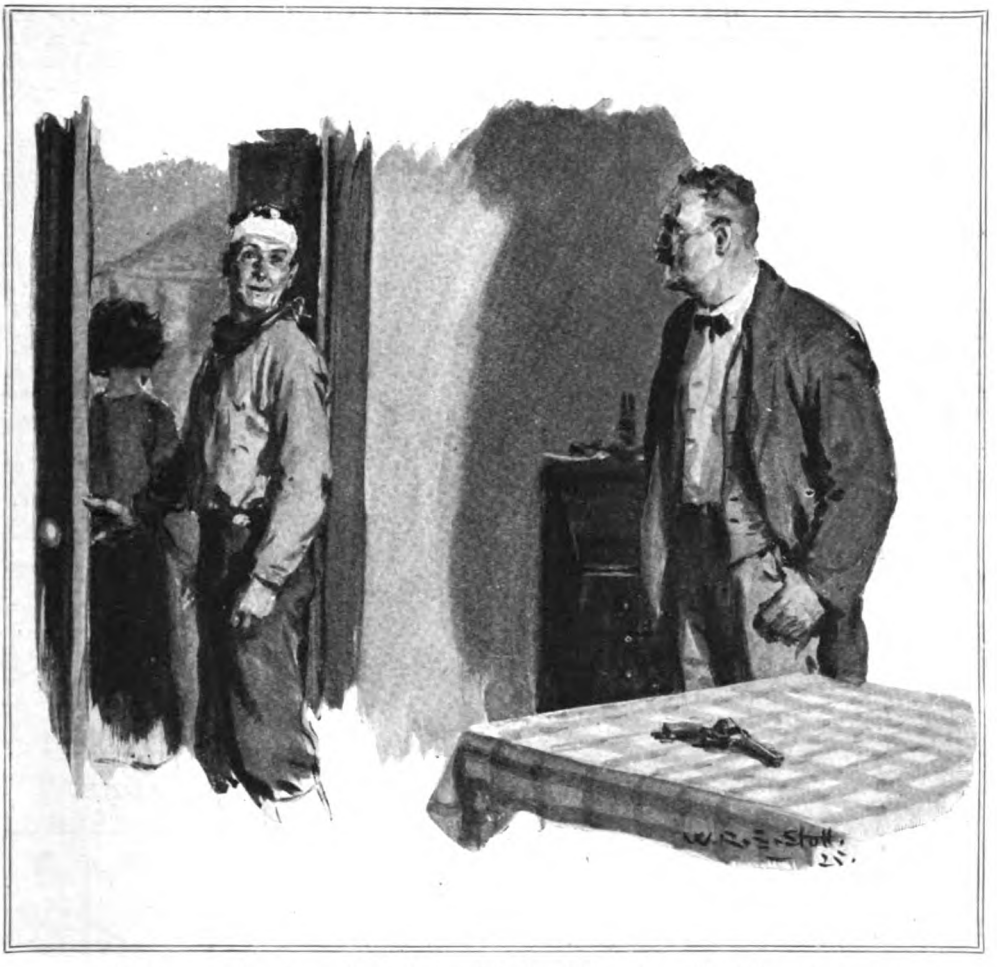
" Ramsey's getting my notice soon as I can hand it in," returned Ducane.

" That's talking ! " approved Hallard. He glanced at the door ; his voice dropped to a tone mysteriously confidential. " Before the little lady gets impatient out there—this morning, if I don't deceive myself, you mentioned some remarks respecting a girl. Don't know whether you're what you would call badly stuck, or what she could consider committed, but if not, you an' me bein' what you might call friendly an' pardners—— ? " He lifted an eyebrow. " If not, seems to me if I was you, and had eyes in my head—— ? "

He lifted the other eyebrow. Ducane, at the door, glanced over his shoulder. A smile slid to the grave corners of his mouth.

" She's the girl," he said simply.

He went out. With eyebrows more elevated as he involuntarily whistled, Hallard listened. " It's funny, but somehow I 'most thought, in the forest, you didn't



Ducane, at the door, glanced over his shoulder. A smile slid to the grave corners of his mouth.
"She's the girl," he said simply.

know me. I did you, in a minute. We didn't ever say much, but you sure saw me often enough, over in San Manuel, to—— Say, you feel all used up and sick yet, don't you? We'll just go and look at the mare and come right in—you've got to stay the night over. Worrying about that old appointment when you can't hardly make out to stand—you need looking after bad as Uncle Dave does, seems to me! Now hold my arm," came Lily's little solicitous voice, sweetly imperative. With a contented nod Hallard took up the revolver and clicked it open.

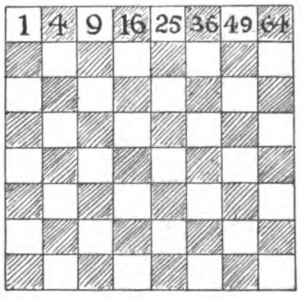
"Reckon," he remarked pensively, and chuckled again, "reckon if that spunky, God a'mighty-proud, flare-up young cuss had looked in the gun an' found I'd shook out the cartridges before I handed it over, so it couldn't ha' hurt a six months' babby 'thout he'd tried to swaller it, he'd have allowed I'd got back on him tolerable neat for that time he guyed me. Yes, I reckon he would, sure!"

# PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

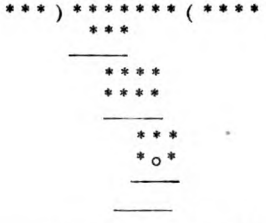
## 795.—A KNIGHT'S PATH.

CAN you place a Knight on the square 1 as its first move and then so play it that it will visit square 4 on its fourth move, square 9 on its ninth move, and so on, making the sixty-fourth and last move on square 64? It is a fascinating little puzzle, though whether the average reader will find it easy or difficult I am unable to say, but it is curious that it should be possible to find a Knight's path in which eight of the moves, successive square numbers, should all end on the top row in the regular order shown. Of course, it would not be possible if the numbers were not alternately odd and even, because every move to a white square must be odd and every move to a black one even. No square may be visited twice.



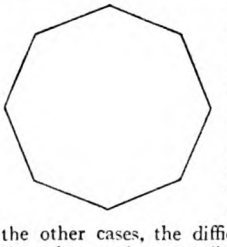

## 796.—ANOTHER SKELETON.

A CORRESPONDENT (A. R. B. T.) sends me the following new skeleton division puzzle, reducing the known figure to a solitary nought. Readers will remember our "Solitary Seven," No. 627 (November, 1922). Attempts have been made to produce a puzzle on these lines without any figures at all being given, and without using a decimal point, as employed in our No. 641 (March, 1923), but so far without success.




## 797.—OCTAGON TO SQUARE.

WE have considered from time to time in these pages the dissection of the equilateral triangle, the pentagon, and the hexagon respectively into the fewest possible pieces that will fit together and form a perfect square. I have now been asked to deal with the octagon, a solution of which I think has never been published. Can you cut the octagon into the fewest pieces possible that will fit together and form a square? Of course, as in the other cases, the difficulty lies entirely in getting those fewest pieces possible.



## 798.—QUEER DIVISION.

OUR arithmeticians may like to try their hand at the following curious problem. Find the smallest number which, when divided successively by 45, 454, 4545, and 45454, leaves remainders 4, 45, 454, and 4545 respectively.

## 799.—AN OLD CHARADE.

HERE is another of those ancient word puzzles that are frequently cropping up and of which the intended solutions have been lost. Can you discover the word? I will give my own proposed solution next month.

My *first* doth affliction denote,
Which my *second* is destined to feel.
My *whole* is a sweet antidote
That affliction to soften and heal.

# Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

## 790.—EASY DRAUGHTS.

PLAY as follows: 6 10, 14–18, 21 17, 13–22, 10 15, 18–23, 15 18, and White wins. The four moves given for White are the only ones that will win.

## 791.—AN OLD CHARADE.

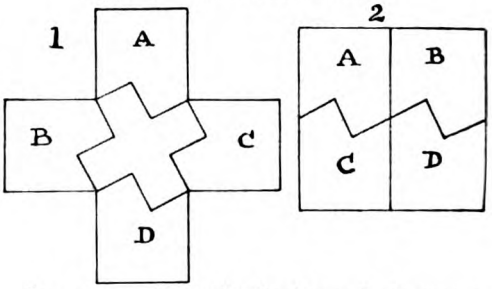
THE word is P E E R - L E S S.

## 792.—DIGITAL ARITHMETIC.

THE following is a solution:—

£1 9s. 7d. × 38 = £56 4s. 2d.

## 793.—A NEW CROSS PUZZLE.




IF we cut out the smaller Greek cross in the manner shown in diagram 1, the four pieces A, B, C, and D will fit together and form a perfect square, as shown in diagram 2.

## 794.—DOMINO SEQUENCES.

IF we withdraw the four dominoes, 7–6, 5–4, 3–2, 1–0, the remaining dominoes may be put together in proper sequence. Any other combinations of these particular numbers would do equally well; thus we might withdraw 7–0, 6–1, 5–2, and 4–3. Generally, for any set of dominoes ending in a double odd number, those withdrawn must contain together every number once from blank up to two less than the highest number in the set. Thus, with a set ending with 3–3, we must withdraw 0–1; with a set ending with 5–5, withdraw 0–1, 2–3; with a set ending with 7–7, withdraw 0–1, 2–3, and 4–5. And so on. Of course, as I have already shown, it is not necessary to withdraw those particular dominoes so long as the numbers are represented.

# THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

## Contents for May, 1926.

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Frontispiece: "I won't call you 'Mummy' any more—not even at bedtimes."
"But isn't that rather unkind?" said Helen, softly.


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| THE GARDENER<br>Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills. | RUDYARD KIPLING | 415 |
| "ALL'S FAIR——"<br>Illustrations by Conrad Leigh. | ROLAND PERTWEE | 427 |
| "DAYS OF MY LIFE."—II.<br>Illustrations by Frank Wiles. | H. RIDER HAGGARD | 440 |
| THE SEASON-TICKET<br>Illustrations by Norman Sutcliffe. | B. MACDONALD HASTINGS | 451 |
| THE LEVEL BUSINESS HEAD<br>Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver. | P. G. WODEHOUSE | 461 |
| AUSTRALIAN CRICKET AND SPECTATORS<br>Illustrations by "Rip." | MAURICE TATE | 472 |
| ACROSTICS | | 479 |
| THE WOMAN WHO FOUND WHAT SHE HAD LOST<br>Illustrations by John Campbell. | AUSTIN PHILIPS | 480 |
| THE REPTILE<br>Illustrations by Conrad Leigh. | AUGUSTUS MUIR | 487 |
| "WHAT SHALL I BE?" The Choice of a Career: | | |
| I.—Business | ALFRED SALMON | 496 |
| II.—The Stage | J. M. GLOVER | 503 |
| III.—The Church<br>Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd and Tom Peddie, and from Photographs. | THE BISHOP OF LONDON | 505 |
| AN EVENTFUL DAY IN THE LIFE OF MISS FAVERSHAM<br>Illustrations by E. G. Oakdale. | RICHMAL CROMPTON | 508 |
| RESTING<br>Illustrations by D. L. Ghilchik. | BARRY PAIN | 517 |
| PERPLEXITIES | HENRY E. DUDENEY | 521 |


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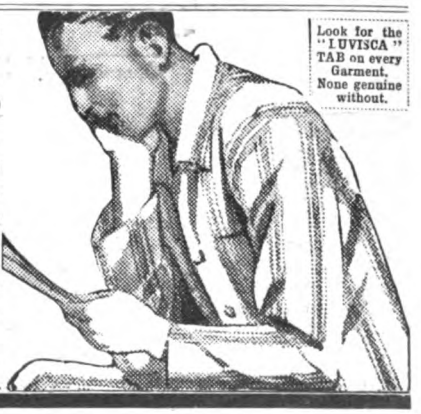

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*To face back of Frontispiece.*

MAY, 1926.

"I WON'T CALL YOU 'MUMMY' ANY MORE—NOT EVEN AT BEDTIMES."
"BUT ISN'T THAT RATHER UNKIND?" SAID HELEN, SOFTLY.

*(See page 420.)*

*Few stories ever roused so much discussion and divergence of opinion as that by Mr. Kipling entitled "They." The following story will be likely to excite as wide a controversy.*

# The Gardener

## By

# RUDYARD KIPLING

*ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS*

One grave to me was given,
  One watch till Judgment Day,
And God looked down from Heaven
  And rolled the stone away.

*One day in all the years,*
  *One hour in that one day,*
*His Angel saw my tears,*
  *And rolled the stone away.*

EVERYONE in the village knew that Helen Turrell did her duty by all her world, and by none more honourably than by her only brother's unfortunate child. The village knew, too, that George Turrell had tried his family severely since early youth, and were not surprised to be told that, after many fresh starts given and thrown away, he, an Inspector of Indian Police, had entangled himself with the daughter of a retired non-commissioned officer, and had died of a fall from a horse a few weeks before his child was born. Mercifully, his father and mother were both dead, and though Helen, thirty-five and independent, might well have washed her hands of the whole disgraceful affair, she most nobly took charge, though she was, at the time, under threat of lung trouble which had driven her to the South of France. She arranged for the passage of the child and a nurse from Bombay, met them at Marseilles, nursed the baby through an attack of infantile dysentery due to the carelessness of the nurse, whom she had to dismiss, and at last, thin and worn but triumphant, brought the boy late in the autumn, wholly restored, to her Hampshire home.

All these details were public property, for Helen was as open as the day, and held that scandals are only increased by hushing them up. She admitted that George had always been rather a black sheep, but things might have been much worse if the mother had insisted on her right to keep the boy. Luckily, it seemed that people of that class would do almost anything for money, and, as George had always turned to her in his scrapes, she felt herself justified—her friends agreed with her—in cutting the whole non-commissioned officer connection, and giving the child every advantage. A christening by the Rector, under the name of Michael, was the first step. So far as she knew herself, she was not, she said, a child-lover, but, for all his faults, she had been very fond of George, and she pointed out that little Michael had his father's mouth to a line; which made something to build upon.

As a matter of fact it was the Turrell forehead, broad, low, and well-shaped, with the widely-spaced eyes beneath it, that Michael had most faithfully reproduced. His mouth was somewhat better cut than the family type. But Helen, who would concede nothing good to his mother's side, vowed he was a Turrell all over, and, there being no one to contradict, the likeness was established.

In a few years Michael took his place, as accepted as Helen had always been—fearless, philosophical, and fairly good-looking. At six, he wished to know why he could not call her "Mummy," as other boys called their mothers. She explained that she was only his auntie, and that aunties were not quite the same as mummies, but that, if it gave him pleasure, he might call her

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"Mummy" at bedtime, for a pet name between themselves.

Michael kept his secret most loyally, but Helen, as usual, explained the fact to her friends; which when Michael heard, he raged.

"Why did you tell? *Why* did you tell?" came at the end of the storm.

"Because it's always best to tell the truth," Helen answered, her arm round him as he shook in his cot.

"All right, but when the troof's ugly I don't think it's nice."

"Don't you, dear?"

"No, I don't, and"—she felt the small body stiffen—"now you've told, I won't call you 'Mummy' any more—not even at bedtimes."

"But isn't that rather unkind?" said Helen, softly.

"I don't care! I don't care! You've hurted me in my insides and I'll hurt you back. I'll hurt you as long as I live!"

"Don't, oh, don't talk like that, dear! You don't know what——"

"I will! And when I'm dead I'll hurt you worse!"

"Thank goodness, I shall be dead long before you, darling."

"Huh! Emma says, 'Never know your luck.'" (Michael had been talking to Helen's elderly, flat-faced maid.) "Lots of little boys die quite soon. So'll I. *Then* you'll see!"

Helen caught her breath and moved

**"I should have got into the show earlier if I'd enlisted."**

towards the door, but the wail of "Mummy! Mummy!" drew her back again, and the two wept together.

AT ten years old, after two terms at a prep. school, something or somebody gave him the idea that his civil status was not quite regular. He attacked Helen

on the subject, breaking down her stammered defences with the family directness.

"'Don't believe a word of it," he said, cheerily, at the end. "People wouldn't have talked like they did if my people had been married. But don't you bother, Auntie. I've found out *all* about my sort in English Hist'ry and the Shakespeare bits. There was William the Conqueror to begin with, and—oh, heaps more, and they all got on first-rate. 'Twon't make any difference to you, my being *that*—will it?"

"As if anything could——" she began.

"All right. We won't talk about it any more if it makes you cry." He never mentioned the thing again of his own will, but when, two years later, he skilfully managed to have measles in the holidays, as his temperature went up to the appointed one hundred and four he muttered of nothing else, till Helen's voice, piercing at last his delirium, reached him with assurance that nothing on earth or anywhere could make any difference between them.

The terms at his public school and the wonderful Christmas, Easter, and Summer holidays followed each other, variegated and glorious as jewels on a string; and as jewels Helen treasured them. In due time Michael developed his own interests, which ran their courses and gave way to others; but his interest in Helen was constant and increasing throughout. She repaid it with all that she had of affection or could command of counsel and money; and since Michael was no fool, the War took him on the edge of what was like to have been a most promising career.

He was to have gone up to Oxford, with a scholarship, in October. At the end of August he was on the edge of joining the first holocaust of public school boys who threw themselves into the Line, but the captain of his O.T.C., where he had been sergeant for nearly a year, headed him off and steered him directly to a commission in a battalion so new that half of it still wore the old Army red, and the other half was breeding meningitis through living overcrowdedly in damp tents. Helen had been shocked at the idea of direct enlistment.

"But it's in the family," Michael laughed.

"You don't mean to tell me that you believed that old story all this time?" said Helen. (Emma, her maid, had been dead now several years.) "I gave you my word of honour—and I give it again—that—that it's all right. It is indeed."

"Oh, *that* doesn't worry me. It never did," he replied, valiantly. "What I meant was, I should have got into the show earlier if I'd enlisted—like my grandfather."

"Don't talk like that! Are you afraid of it's ending so soon, then?"

"No such luck. You know what K. says."

"Yes. But my banker told me last Monday it couldn't *possibly* last beyond Christmas—for financial reasons."

"'Hope he's right, but our Colonel—and he's a Regular—says it's going to be a long job."

Michael's battalion was fortunate in that, by some chance which meant several "leaves," it was used for coast-defence among shallow trenches on the Norfolk coast; thence sent north to watch the mouth of a Scotch estuary, and lastly held for weeks on a baseless rumour of Eastern service. But, the very day that Michael was to have met Helen for four whole hours at a railway-junction up the line, it was hurled out, to help make good the wastage of Loos, and he had only just time to send her a wire of farewell.

In France luck again helped the battalion. It was put down near the Salient, where it led a meritorious and unexacting life, while the Somme was being manufactured; and enjoyed the peace of the Armentières and Laventie sectors when that battle began. Finding that it had sound views on protecting its own flanks and could dig, a prudent Commander stole it out of its own division, under pretence of helping to lay telegraphs, and used it round Ypres at large.

A month later, and just after Michael had written Helen that there was nothing special doing and therefore no need to worry, a shell-splinter dropping out of a wet dawn killed him at once, while the next shell uprooted and laid down over the body what had been the foundation of a barn wall, so neatly that none but an expert would have guessed that anything unpleasant had happened.

BY this time the village was old in experience of war, and, English fashion, had evolved a ritual to meet it. When the postmistress handed her seven-year-old daughter the official telegram to take to Miss Turrell, she observed to the Rector's gardener: "It's Miss Helen's turn now." He replied, thinking of his own son: "Well, he's lasted longer than some." The child herself came to the front door weeping aloud, because Master Michael had often given her sweets. Helen, presently, found herself pulling down the house-blinds one after one with great care, and saying earnestly to each: "Missing *always* means dead." Then she took her place in the dreary procession that was impelled to go through an inevitable series of unprofitable emotions. The Rector, of course, preached hope and prophesied word, very soon, from a prison camp. Several friends, too, told her perfectly truthful tales, but always about other women, to whom, after months and months of silence, their missing had been miraculously restored. Other people urged her to communicate with infallible Secretaries of organizations who could communicate with benevolent neutrals, who could extract accurate information from the most secretive of Hun prison commandants. Helen did and wrote and signed everything that was suggested or put before her.

Once, on one of Michael's leaves, he had taken her over a munition factory, where she saw the progress of a shell from blank-iron to the all but finished article. It struck her at the time that the wretched thing was never left alone for a single second, and "I'm being manufactured into a bereaved next-of-kin," she told herself, as she prepared her documents.

In due course, when all the organizations had deeply or sincerely regretted their inability to trace, etc., something gave way within her and all sensation—save of thankfulness for the release—came to an end in blessed passivity. Michael had died and her world had stood still and she had been one with the full shock of that arrest. Now she was standing still and the world was going forward, but it did not concern her—in no way or relation did it touch her. She knew this by the ease with which she could slip Michael's name into talk and incline her head to the proper angle, at the proper murmur of sympathy.

In the blessed realization of that relief, the Armistice with all its bells broke over her and passed unheeded. At the end of another year she had overcome her physical loathing of the living and returned young, so that she could take them by the hand and almost sincerely wish them well. She had no interest in any aftermath, national or personal, of the war, but, as moving at an immense distance, she sat on various relief committees and held strong views—she heard herself delivering them—on the site of the proposed village War Memorial.

Then there came to her, as next of kin, an official intimation, backed by a page of a letter to her in indelible pencil, a silver identity disc, and a watch, to the effect that the body of Lieutenant Michael Turrell had been found, identified, and re-interred in Hagenzeele Third Military Cemetery—the letter of the row and the grave's number in that row duly given.

So Helen found herself moved on to another process of the manufacture—to a world full of exultant or broken relatives, now strong in the certainty that there was an altar upon earth where they might lay

She fell forward on Helen's breast.

their love. These soon told her, and by means of time-tables made clear, how easy it was and how little it interfered with life's affairs to go and see one's grave.

"*So* different," as the Rector's wife said, "if he'd been killed in Mesopotamia, or even Gallipoli."

The agony of being waked up to some sort of second life drove Helen across the Channel, where, in a new world of abbreviated titles, she learnt that Hagenzeele Third could be

comfortably reached by an afternoon train which fitted in with the morning boat, and that there was a comfortable little hotel not three kilometres from Hagenzeele itself, where one could spend quite a comfortable night and see one's grave next morning. All this she had from a Central Authority who lived in a board and tar-paper shed on the skirts of a razed city full of whirling lime-dust and blown papers.

"By the way," said he, "you know your grave, of course?"

"Yes, thank you," said Helen, and showed its row and number typed on Michael's own little typewriter. The officer would have checked it, out of one of his many books; but a large Lancashire woman thrust between them and bade him tell her where she might find her son, who had been corporal in the A.S.C. His proper name, she sobbed, was Anderson, but, coming of respectable folk, he had of course enlisted under the name of Smith; and had been killed at Dickiebush, in early 'Fifteen. She had not his number nor did she know which of his two Christian names he had used with his *alias;* but her Cook's tourist ticket expired at the end of Easter week, and if by then she could not find her child she should go mad. Whereupon she fell forward on Helen's breast; but the officer's wife came out quickly from a little bedroom behind the office, and the three of them lifted the woman on to the cot.

"They are often like this," said the officer's wife, loosening the tight bonnet-strings. "Yesterday she said he'd been killed at Hooge. Are you sure you know your grave? It makes such a difference."

"Yes, thank you," said Helen, and hurried out before the woman on the bed should begin to lament again.

TEA in a crowded mauve and blue striped wooden structure, with a false front, carried her still further into the nightmare. She paid her bill beside a stolid, plain-featured Englishwoman, who, hearing her inquire about the train to Hagenzeele, volunteered to come with her.

"I'm going to Hagenzeele myself," she explained. "Not to Hagenzeele Third; mine is Sugar Factory, but they call it La Rosière now. It's just south of Hagenzeele Three. Have you got your room at the hotel there?"

"Oh, yes, thank you. I've wired."

"That's better. Sometimes the place is quite full, and at others there's hardly a soul. But they've put new bathrooms into the old Lion d'Or—that's the hotel on the west side of Sugar Factory—and it draws off a lot of people, luckily."

"It's all new to me. This is the first time I've been over."

"Indeed! This is my ninth time since the Armistice. Not on my own account. *I* haven't lost anyone, thank God—but, like everyone else, I've a lot of friends at home who have. Coming over as often as I do, I find it helps them to have someone just look at the—the place and tell them about it afterwards. And one can take photos for them, too. I get quite a list of commissions to execute in that way." She laughed nervously and tapped her slung Kodak.

"There are two or three to see at Sugar Factory this time, and plenty of others in the cemeteries all about. *My* system is to save them up, and arrange them, you know. And when I've got enough commissions for one area to make it worth while, I pop over and execute them. It *does* comfort people."

"I suppose so," Helen answered, shivering as they entered the little train.

"Of course it does. (Isn't it lucky we've got window-seats?) It must do or they wouldn't ask one to do it, would they? I've a list of quite twelve or fifteen commissions here"—she tapped the Kodak again—"I must sort them out to-night. Oh, I forgot to ask you. What's yours?"

"My nephew," said Helen. "But I was very fond of him."

"Ah, yes! I sometimes wonder whether *they* know after death? What do *you* think?"

"Oh, I don't—I haven't dared to think much about that sort of thing," said Helen, almost lifting her hands to keep her off.

"Perhaps that's better," the woman answered. "The sense of loss must be enough, I expect. Well, I won't worry you any more."

Helen was grateful, but when they reached the hotel Mrs. Scarsworth (they had exchanged names) insisted on dining at the same table with her, and after the meal, in the little, hideous salon full of low-voiced relatives, took Helen through her "commissions" with biographies of the dead, where she happened to know them, and sketches of their next of kin. Helen endured till nearly half-past nine, ere she fled to her room.

Almost at once there was a knock at her door and Mrs. Scarsworth entered; her hands, holding the dreadful list, clasped before her.

"Yes—yes—*I* know," she began; "You're sick of me, but I want to tell you something. You—you aren't married, are you? Then perhaps you won't . . . But it doesn't

All she saw was a merciless sea of black crosses.

matter. I've *got* to tell someone. I can't go on any longer like this."

"But please——" Mrs. Scarsworth had backed against the shut door, and her mouth worked dryly.

"In a minute," she said. "You—you know about these graves of mine I was telling you about downstairs, just now? They really *are* commissions. At least several of them are." Her eye wandered round the room. "What extraordinary wall-papers they have in Belgium, don't you think? . . . Yes. I swear they are commissions. But there's *one*, d'you see, and—and he was more to me than anything else in the world. Do you understand?"

Helen nodded.

"More than anyone else. And, of course, he oughtn't to have been. He ought to have been nothing to me. But he *was*. He *is*. That's why I do the commissions, you see. That's all."

"But why do you tell me?" Helen asked desperately.

"Because I'm *so* tired of lying. Tired of lying—always lying—year in and year out. When I don't tell lies I've got to act 'em and I've got to think 'em, always. *You* don't know what that means. He was everything to me that he oughtn't to have been—the one real thing—the only thing that ever happened to me in all my life; and I've had to pretend he wasn't. I've had to watch every word I said, and think out what lie I'd tell next, for years and years!"

"How many years?" Helen asked.

"Six years and four months before, and two and three-quarters after. I've gone to him eight times, since; to-morrow'll make the ninth, and—and I can't—I *can't* go to him again with nobody in the world knowing. I want to be honest with someone before I go. Do you understand? It doesn't matter about *me*. I was never truthful, even as a girl. But it isn't worthy of *him*. So—so I—I had to tell you. I can't keep it up any longer. Oh, I can't!"

She lifted her joined hands almost to the level of her mouth, and brought them down sharply, still joined, to full arms' length below her waist. Helen reached forward, caught them, bowed her head over them, and murmured: "Oh, my dear! My dear!" Mrs. Scarsworth stepped back, her face all mottled.

"My God!" said she. "Is *that* how you take it?"

Helen could not speak, and the woman went out; but it was a long while before Helen was able to sleep.

NEXT morning Mrs. Scarsworth left early on her round of commissions, and Helen walked alone to Hagenzeele Third. The place was still in the making, and stood some five or six feet above the metalled road, which it flanked for hundreds of yards. Culverts across a deep ditch served for entrances through the unfinished boundary wall. She climbed a few wooden-faced earthen steps and then met the entire crowded level of the thing in one held breath. She did not know that Hagenzeele Third counted twenty-one thousand dead already. All she saw was a merciless sea of black crosses, bearing little strips of stamped tin at all angles across their faces. She could distinguish no order or arrangement in their mass; nothing but a waist-high wilderness as of weeds stricken dead, rushing at her. She went forward, moved to the left and the right hopelessly, wondering by what guidance she should ever come to her own. A great distance away there was a line of whiteness. It proved to be a block of some two or three hundred graves whose headstones had already been set, whose flowers were planted out, and whose new-sown turf showed green. Here she could see clear-cut letters at the ends of the rows, and, referring to her slip, realized that it was not here she must look.

A man knelt behind a line of headstones—evidently a gardener, for he was firming a young plant in the soft earth. She went towards him, her paper in her hand. He rose at her approach and without prelude or salutation asked: "Who are you looking for?"

"Lieutenant Michael Turrell—my nephew," said Helen slowly and word for word, as she had many thousands of times in her life.

The man lifted his eyes and looked at her with infinite compassion before he turned from the fresh-sown grass toward the naked black crosses.

"Come with me," he said, "and I will show you where your son lies."

WHEN Helen left the cemetery she turned for a last look. In the distance she saw the man bending over his young plants, and she went away, supposing him to be the gardener.

# "All's Fair —"

by

# ROLAND PERTWEE

*ILLUSTRATED BY CONRAD LEIGH*

IT has been said that a writer is a traitor to friendship, for you shall never know with him whether he attends for your sake or his own; but as to whether or no I behaved traitorously in the affair of Ronald Elliston is a question I shall not concern myself to answer.

Ronald, when first I met him, was so young—so green—so inexperienced—that to have double-crossed him called for greater callousness than any of which I was capable. True, I resented the disarming respect with which he treated me, for, being several years short of forty, I did not expect to be "sirred" by a fellow just down from the 'Varsity, especially one who had left behind him a reputation for sport and scholarship. I fancy his studies must have been of an academic kind, for he bore with him into the larger world none of those graces of demeanour and address to be found in the more debonair type of undergraduate. He was the personification of bashfulness, purity, and retirement. Even his own father, Sir Harry Elliston, a baronet of the old school, who liked a glass of port and a ripe yarn to season it, was cautious of what he said before the boy. The aftermath of a dinner was a dull affair when Ronald was present. Anyway, there he was—a son of which any mother had reason to be proud if not surprised. I suspected from the very first that the Bart thought he was a ninny. This was natural enough, for the Bart was English to the core. His code of manhood was severe, and he cherished fixed ideas for the conduct of children—especially of boys.

"Let 'em rough it at a public school—smooth it at the 'Varsity, then make fools of 'emselves for a couple of years 'fore settlin' down."

Lady Elliston did not support the latter period of her husband's views. By no means should any son of hers be allowed to make a fool of himself or engage in the perilous adventure of salad days. There was some excuse for Lady Elliston, who, before marriage, had been one of the Five Beautiful Miss Crewes of Chichester, a family renowned for devotion and good breeding.

I had received an invitation to spend a fortnight with the Ellistons, and it was at a shooting-party I first met Ronald. He was a beautiful youth, but at that moment unpopular, owing to a distressing tendency to shoot late at driven birds. The Bart, who, if he missed a bird at all, missed it in front, could not tolerate technical errors of this kind.

"Give it more beak, boy, dammitanhell, more beak."

But Ronald went on knocking out tail feathers in spite of his father's rollicking curses.

The lad's timid graces and the delicate way he handled a gun, coupled with a habit of continually looking at me, caused me grave uneasiness. At best but a poor shot, this prolonged stare robbed me not only of skill but of what little luck might otherwise have come my way.

At last, unable to stand it longer, I asked if anything was wrong, and whether it was my hat that troubled him.

"No, sir, rather not," was the answer, to the accompaniment of a furious blush. "Good Lord, no. I like it awfully. I was looking at you."

This I had realized, if not the reason. Birds came and went. I missed them all.

"You wrote 'The Guinea's-worth,' didn't you, sir?"

I said I had.

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matter. I've *got* to tell someone. I can't go on any longer like this."

"But please——" Mrs. Scarsworth had backed against the shut door, and her mouth worked dryly.

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"My God!" said she. "Is *that* how you take it?"

Helen could not speak, and the woman went out; but it was a long while before Helen was able to sleep.

NEXT morning Mrs. Scarsworth left early on her round of commissions, and Helen walked alone to Hagenzeele Third. The place was still in the making, and stood some five or six feet above the metalled road, which it flanked for hundreds of yards. Culverts across a deep ditch served for entrances through the unfinished boundary wall. She climbed a few wooden-faced earthen steps and then met the entire crowded level of the thing in one held breath. She did not know that Hagenzeele Third counted twenty-one thousand dead already. All she saw was a merciless sea of black crosses, bearing little strips of stamped tin at all angles across their faces. She could distinguish no order or arrangement in their mass; nothing but a waist-high wilderness as of weeds stricken dead, rushing at her. She went forward, moved to the left and the right hopelessly, wondering by what guidance she should ever come to her own. A great distance away there was a line of whiteness. It proved to be a block of some two or three hundred graves whose headstones had already been set, whose flowers were planted out, and whose new-sown turf showed green. Here she could see clear-cut letters at the ends of the rows, and, referring to her slip, realized that it was not here she must look.

A man knelt behind a line of headstones—evidently a gardener, for he was firming a young plant in the soft earth. She went towards him, her paper in her hand. He rose at her approach and without prelude or salutation asked: "Who are you looking for?"

"Lieutenant Michael Turrell—my nephew," said Helen slowly and word for word, as she had many thousands of times in her life.

The man lifted his eyes and looked at her with infinite compassion before he turned from the fresh-sown grass toward the naked black crosses.

"Come with me," he said, "and I will show you where your son lies."

WHEN Helen left the cemetery she turned for a last look. In the distance she saw the man bending over his young plants, and she went away, supposing him to be the gardener.

# "All's Fair —"

by

# ROLAND PERTWEE

*ILLUSTRATED BY CONRAD LEIGH*

IT has been said that a writer is a traitor to friendship, for you shall never know with him whether he attends for your sake or his own; but as to whether or no I behaved traitorously in the affair of Ronald Elliston is a question I shall not concern myself to answer.

Ronald, when first I met him, was so young—so green—so inexperienced—that to have double-crossed him called for greater callousness than any of which I was capable. True, I resented the disarming respect with which he treated me, for, being several years short of forty, I did not expect to be "sirred" by a fellow just down from the 'Varsity, especially one who had left behind him a reputation for sport and scholarship. I fancy his studies must have been of an academic kind, for he bore with him into the larger world none of those graces of demeanour and address to be found in the more debonair type of undergraduate. He was the personification of bashfulness, purity, and retirement. Even his own father, Sir Harry Elliston, a baronet of the old school, who liked a glass of port and a ripe yarn to season it, was cautious of what he said before the boy. The aftermath of a dinner was a dull affair when Ronald was present. Anyway, there he was—a son of which any mother had reason to be proud if not surprised. I suspected from the very first that the Bart thought he was a ninny. This was natural enough, for the Bart was English to the core. His code of manhood was severe, and he cherished fixed ideas for the conduct of children—especially of boys.

"Let 'em rough it at a public school—smooth it at the 'Varsity, then make fools of 'emselves for a couple of years 'fore settlin' down."

Lady Elliston did not support the latter period of her husband's views. By no means should any son of hers be allowed to make a fool of himself or engage in the perilous adventure of salad days. There was some excuse for Lady Elliston, who, before marriage, had been one of the Five Beautiful Miss Crewes of Chichester, a family renowned for devotion and good breeding.

I had received an invitation to spend a fortnight with the Ellistons, and it was at a shooting-party I first met Ronald. He was a beautiful youth, but at that moment unpopular, owing to a distressing tendency to shoot late at driven birds. The Bart, who, if he missed a bird at all, missed it in front, could not tolerate technical errors of this kind.

"Give it more beak, boy, dammitanhell, more beak."

But Ronald went on knocking out tail feathers in spite of his father's rollicking curses.

The lad's timid graces and the delicate way he handled a gun, coupled with a habit of continually looking at me, caused me grave uneasiness. At best but a poor shot, this prolonged stare robbed me not only of skill but of what little luck might otherwise have come my way.

At last, unable to stand it longer, I asked if anything was wrong, and whether it was my hat that troubled him.

"No, sir, rather not," was the answer, to the accompaniment of a furious blush. "Good Lord, no. I like it awfully. I was looking at you."

This I had realized, if not the reason. Birds came and went. I missed them all.

"You wrote 'The Guinea's-worth,' didn't you, sir?"

I said I had.

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"And that marvellous play, 'A Blank Cheque on Eternity'?"

I said I had.

"By George, sir—oh, by George!" said he.

Admiration is never so plentiful but we shall relish of it. I may have smiled. Ronald laid aside his gun and approached me. I warned him to keep his distance as I was armed.

"I've seen the 'Blank Cheque' eleven times," said he, "and, sir, I'd see it a hundred times if I had my way."

I began to suspect that all was not well with him. Had "A Blank Cheque" been a musical comedy, I could have understood his enthusiasm, but it was a serious play—an attempt to improve the morals of my fellow-men by revealing them in all their nakedness.

"If you like it so much," said I, "I'll present you with a copy of the play."

But he did not show the enthusiasm I had expected.

"It's terribly good of you, sir, and I should love it, but it's hardly the same as seeing it, I mean, is it? I mean, Nada couldn't read as she's acted."

So that was it! Authors sometimes overlook the attractions of the cast.

"Ah, Nada," said I, and frowned.

"I think Alves Fossdyck is the most perfect actress I've ever seen."

"Yes, she's all right," I said. "Very good—a clever girl, Alves."

"That temperament of hers, sir." His voice glowed with praise. "Oh, her temperament!"

"Quite so," said I, but bluntly, for I had attended the rehearsals and he had not. You can have too much of temperament.

The white coats of the beaters glimmered through the undergrowth. A cloud of pheasants rose, enveloped us, and passed unscathed. The whistle blew.

"Before we part, sir," whispered Ronald hastily, "don't repeat what I've been saying, will you? Mother's old-fashioned and wouldn't approve of my going to 'A Blank Cheque,' and father's old school and would be only too glad. See what I mean?"

So Ronald Elliston was not without humour. I promised. There was a gathering together of the guns—ladies arrived in motor wagonettes. We repaired to a kind of tin Bethel in the woods for luncheon.

I FOUND myself next to Lady Elliston, with a girl on my left to whom I had not up to then been introduced. The girl, who was called Meggie, had the figure of a boy and the feet of a child. Her face was either all smiles or all frowns, and it is astonishing how attractive a complete absence of half-tones can be. For hair, someone had been busy with gold leaf on a smooth surface. It ran like water over her head and turned up insolently at the ends. Delicious hair.

"My son's *fiancée*," whispered Lady Elliston. "Such a dear girl. Meggie, you don't know Mr. Chalmers."

"No, but mother does," came the answer, on top of one of those brilliant smiles, "and since your success she's quite stuck-up about it. I say, isn't Alves Fossdyck good in that play of yours?"

I heard Lady Elliston make a kind of whistling noise that was gently reproving, a sound between silence and speech. I asked her mother's name.

"Wivenhoe—old George Wivenhoe's wife."

I laughed.

"Then we ought to be friends, for I've met the Wivenhoes—old George and wife—in dozens of places at home and abroad, though never in their own house."

"It's always shut, our house is," said Meggie, "for father—old George, you know—is more entertained than entertaining. There he is, coming in now telling a funny story."

"Which proves the injustice of your words," said I.

"Not at all, it doesn't," said she.

Old George, a little balloon of a man, with very bright eyes and a piercing smile, came up and gave me a punch of welcome.

"Heard you were comin'," said he. "Glad ter see yer, very glad. And Madam'll be glad too."

"Isn't it awful the way old George calls mother Madam, as though she were the Veuve Clicquot or one of the Tousseaux from Marylebone Road," said Meggie.

"Go on with yer," said old Wivenhoe, bouncing into an empty chair. "Yes, that's Meggie, Chalmers, that's our Meggie, and a proper cure she is—a reg'lar caution of a gel."

As the family of Wivenhoe dated back to the Feudal Barons, old George felt entitled to use only the copper coinage of the language. LadyElliston wished he wouldn't, which was natural, her own family having become rather muddled up during the reign of Charles II. and standing in constant need of pulling together and straightening out.

Angrily, I suspected now that the engagement between Ronald and Meggie was part of a general system of underpinning, buttressing, and shoring up. Disgraceful.

"To see these two dear young people married is my fondest wish," she confided to me in a sort of private whisper, which reverberated round the luncheon table. "When Meggie was born I said to Alice

**The lad's timid graces and the delicate way he handled a gun caused me grave uneasiness.**

Wivenhoe, 'In that cradle is my boy's bride.'"

"Quite," said Meggie, neutral and grave as an owl. "Quite, and poor Ronald was born two years later to fulfil his destiny."

In the laughter which followed I found myself unable to join. Doubtless arranged marriages are well enough in their way, but I prefer youth to follow primitive instincts rather than stand upon the choice of friends or parents.

"And they're going to be so—so happy," said Lady Elliston, and whistled menacingly as who should say, "Or they'll hear about it."

Meggie, who had carried her smile for a long time, switched on the frown for a moment. Perhaps she was superstitious of prophecy. I don't know. I looked across the table at Ronald, to find that he was still looking at me.

I was beginning to think the boy was cracked.

Catching a spark from my eye, he emerged as from a dream, and said :—

"Alves Fossdyck! Were you talking of Alves Fossdyck, sir?"

"About ten minutes ago," said I, "but we've stopped now."

From Meggie came the tiniest snort of laughter.

"Oh!" said Ronald, and relapsed into dreamland and contemplation.

Lady Elliston filled her lungs and straightened. I heard a shoulder strap sunder its stitches. She shot a swift glance at her son, whistled a few dry notes, and accused me with :—

"Of course, in your profession you have to know a great many stage people—naturally it could hardly be otherwise."

Well, naturally! But I resented the tone, which seemed to suggest that I was an inspector of jails, or one of that gallant band who don gum-boots and descend into sewers, remote from the light of day.

"I have never understood what persuades people to adopt so strange a profession," said she.

Meggie was twinkling. She said :—

"Perhaps they do it to provide men like dear old George Wivenhoe with memories of their youth."

Old George shook a fat fist at his daughter

and accused her of being a puss. He added: "Meaow!" for no good reason that I could see.

"This Miss Fossdyck," Lady Elliston pursued, one eye still fixed on the blushing, downcast face of her son. "No doubt a very good artiste, but, even so, one cannot but be sorry for her parents."

"I would not advise you to share your sympathy with them," I hastened to say. "Alves' parents are very rightly proud of her."

From Ronald came an unexpected: "There you are. I mean, are they really, sir?"

Said Meggie: "The sleeper awakes. So this is the world! How strange it all seems!"

Ronald scowled—a claret-coloured scowl, and looked shocked. As a lover, I thought him a dull ass.

Sir Harry, who approved chaff as one of the character-building institutions of the country, nodded appreciation over a salad-laden fork

"That gel's a cure," said old George. "Ain't she, now?"

"But what manner of parents?" queried Lady Elliston. "What manner of people can they be?"

"The father," I replied, "is an elephant-hunter. The mother is a loquacious little woman who spends her life between Wardour Street and a villa facing the Solent. Before becoming a Fossdyck she was, I understand, a Smith of Southsea."

Meggie laughed. "Aren't you a joke?" said she. "I'm sure I am going to like you awfully."

It is not every day a girl with a smile, a frown, hair of liquid gold, and humour, happy and her own, tells me she is going to like me awfully. It does not happen once a year or once in five years. I glowed, and would have glowed to some purpose but that I remembered savagely she was the affianced wife of my host's son. Glowing was therefore malinspired. Not that Ronald seemed to care. Dull ass: staring at his plate. Now if Meggie had been my *fiancée*—but what use to speculate?

During the short—all too short—afternoon, she bore me company at the shooting, and though I cannot say I shot the better on that account, I would not have surrendered her to any man.

"Do you like Ronald?" she asked. "I don't expect you do—boys in love aren't very amusing, are they?"

"They're too busy," said I.

She nodded.

"Love is ripping, though, don't you think? But anything's ripping that takes us right out of ourselves."

I assented.

"I never believed that Ronald could be so much in love."

I replied: "He has reason to be."

"Who should know that better than you?" she answered—a strange answer, I thought.

"Oh, quite," I said. "Quite. I suppose you are very fond of the boy?"

"Of course I'm fond of him. He's such a dear, isn't he?"

"He is precisely what you say he is—to you," I replied, coldly.

Her smile twinkled out of gravity.

"You needn't be disagreeable. Ronald's one of the few people alive I'd make a sacrifice for."

"You are going to——"

She shot an inquiry at me.

"Going to marry him," I explained.

"Oh, quite," she mocked, "but I wasn't thinking of that."

I was, but without enthusiasm. In my opinion, young Ronald Elliston was a great deal luckier than he deserved. What had he done except to be born? Others also had been born. I had been born. But whereas I had grown up to the stature of appreciation, he was still in the cradle. He had the rosy cheeks of a babe, the early dews still glistened in his eyes. Why, then——? Bah! Women love babies. Even this woman, with her wit and understanding. I wished I had never met either of them.

THE afternoon's sport ended and we drifted apart. Ronald and I walked back to the house together.

"Young fellow," said I, "you are a very lucky young man."

He showed surprise, a fault in chivalry, for there could be no doubt as to my meaning.

"How, sir?"

"In being engaged to Miss Meggie."

"Oh, that," said he.

"That," I repeated. "You call it 'that' to be engaged to the most attractive girl in the world."

"Oh, Meggie's all right, sir, tip-top, but what I mean is engagements aren't quite the same thing."

"How do you mean—what do you mean?" I demanded. "I can't see that you mean anything."

"Well, sir, everybody's engaged more or less, I mean."

"Everybody isn't engaged to Margaret Wivenhoe."

"No; I only mean there isn't much kick in being engaged."

I could see a very good reason for being kicked for not wanting to be engaged.

"Do you like Ronald?" she asked. "I don't expect you do—boys in love aren't very amusing, are they?"

"There isn't much point in working oneself up about it, is there?"

I was beginning to regret having given my gun to a loader.

"Meggie," he went on, "is a good sort—the best of good sorts—but look at it how you will, it isn't quite the same."

I'm afraid I roared.

"As what?"

Ronald blushed wildly and relapsed into silence. Nor could any silence of mine persuade him to speak again. And because he refused to speak, I was left with my thoughts, and because I thought I discovered I had fallen in love with Meggie Wivenhoe, which was a pity and a nuisance and very distressing, too.

During the week that followed—it was

Christmas week—evidence was not lacking that Lady Elliston was troubled in her mind as to Ronald's courtship of Meggie. And well she may have been, for when together Ronald would sit with hands down-hanging and an expression of melancholy upon his face. And Meggie would frown, frown, and frown. There was little excuse for such despondence, for never had I stayed in a house more plentifully sprinkled with mistletoe. The wretched boy seemed insensible to the invitation of these waxen berries. I have never seen a more miserable pair.

"That boy of yours, Harry," said old George Wivenhoe, one night after his third glass of port, "is too shy to change his shirt before a hand-glass."

Over a tilted decanter the Bart nodded.

"He needs livening up, George, and your gel don't seem able to do it."

"You can hardly expect a girl of spirit to coax a fellow into making love to her," said I. "She has the future to think of."

George Wivenhoe cracked a nut with his teeth to prove they were not detachable.

"Hear, hear! and damn good for you," said he. "Trouble is, Madam and your Ladysworth fixed this up between 'em and left the youngsters nothin' to do for 'emselves. It's been a damsite too easy, and what's easy ain't worth havin'."

The Bart nodded gloomily.

"The whole thing falls down," said he, "on a question of experience. Young men have no right to get engaged until they've been through the mill. I know, you know, and Chalmers here, he knows, that the affections of a fellow who hasn't knocked round a bit ain't attractive to a gel. If Ronald's to cut ice with Meggie, he'll only do it after cuttin' ice with a dozen other Meggies."

"There are no other Meggies," I said, with heat.

"Other gels, then, if you want to be so fine. When I married Emily Crewe I'd been over the sticks and hurdles, and so'd old George—and so've you, or that face o' yours is a forgery."

It was not worth while arguing the point. The sacred half-hour after dinner is not the time to protest one's innocence.

"Be consequence we know the way of a man with a maid *and* we know how to make the best husbands. Port's at your elbow, George."

Old George helped himself.

"When I was one-and-twenty——" he began, but we were dealing in generalities and not individual reminiscences.

The Bart cut him short.

"As a result of experience we know how to handle women."

It was the way of the Bart to discover, in himself, great sex courage after the ladies had left the room.

"The handling seems to have broken down in this case," said I. "Lady Elliston and Mrs. Wivenhoe seem to have had much their own way about it."

There was some embarrassment in the silence that followed. Old George at length found the courage to reply.

"When you're older, my boy, you'll discover there's a big difference between handling women and handling wives. Eh? How's that, Harry?"

"Tremendous, George—for you it's tremendous."

I LEFT them congratulating each other and joined the ladies in the Jade Drawing Room. They were sitting about in attitudes of people wondering if there was going to be a little music, and hoping not. Ronald and Meggie were side by side on a small settee. Ronald was playing with the button of his dinner jacket. Meggie was frowning and yawning. My first impression of her was of a coral uvula. Two or three other girls—too young to be really bored—were practising meccano smiles with which to delight old George when he should appear. The Hon. Mrs. Wivenhoe and Lady Elliston rigidly faced each other from two small chairs, ready as it were for conversation, a game of cat's-cradle, or an exhibition of thought-reading.

My appearance was the cue for a general "perhaps something will happen now" kind of movement.

"Ronald," said Lady Elliston, "take Meggie to the billiard-room and give her a game."

"All right," said Ronald.

Meggie added: "Come and mark for us, Mr. Chalmers, if it wouldn't excite you too much."

But Lady Elliston roped me with an eyebrow.

"Dear Mr. Chalmers is going to talk to us," she said, and whistled as though to a dog.

As I came to heel, Meggie made a face at me and went out.

"There's a gramophone in the Music Room. Wouldn't you girls like to try a few dance steps together?"

The three girls, who were too young to be really bored, thought they wouldn't like that.

"Nonsense! Of course you would," said Mrs. Wivenhoe in a rich contralto.

As the door closed I began to feel very much alone.

"Now," said Lady Elliston, "shall I begin, Alice, or will you?"

"Do you," chanted Mrs. Wivenhoe.

" As you wish. Mr. Chalmers, I have made a very dreadful discovery."

I said I was sorry to hear that and hoped not.

Said she : " Listen."

I listened.

" The news was brought to me by Sparrow."

" One moment," I interrupted. ' Do you mean by a little bird ? "

" I do not. Sparrow is my sewing maid. You may have seen her."

Yes, I had—a little black crow of a woman —a bird of ill-omen, slipping in and out of half-open doors. I nodded.

" As you are aware, Ronald went to town last night and did not return until one a.m."

" He was dining with a man from Trinity," said I.

" Mr. Chalmers, this is Ronald's twelfth engagement with the man from Trinity."

" They must have much in common, Lady Elliston."

" Mr. Chalmers, the man from Trinity was a mere excuse—a blind ! "

" Excuse for a blind ! Lady Elliston, you shock me."

" A deception, Mr. Chalmers. Ronald went to London to meet no one."

" What a curious place to have chosen for that ! " said I.

" He went for a purpose of his own—and, at the risk of paining you, it was a dark and hideous purpose."

I braced myself for the worst.

" He went to see ' A Blank Cheque on Eternity.' "

" But how," I asked, " can you be sure of this ? "

" Sparrow, on my instructions, followed him."

" Not, I hope, into the theatre."

" I gave her three-and-six and she put herself in the pit. Ronald was alone in the stalls."

" There is," I said, " a silver lining to most suspicions, but how disappointing for Sparrow."

Lady Elliston shook her head gravely.

" Mr. Chalmers, it was not the first time he had been to that play alone."

She took from her bag a crumpled packet of theatre ticket counterfoils.

" These were found in his dress waistcoats and brought to me one at a time by Sparrow. There are eleven, and with last night it makes twelve. There is only one explanation. My boy has become infatuated with an actress. Ronald is his father over again."

" Lady Elliston," I said, " I really don't see how this concerns me."

" Surely, as my guest, as a man for whom Ronald has a deep respect, you would wish to rescue him from this terrible situation ? "

I SPOKE—I spoke at length. I said that there was no terrible situation, that heaps of people went to ' A Blank Cheque ' and were all the better for it. That I happened to know Ronald had never met Alves Fossdyck, but that if ever he did it would be a liberal education for him. I finished up with a word to the detriment of Sparrows.

When I ended Mrs. Wivenhoe began. She released her contralto and bayed at me. And the rot she talked, the rubbish about the fusion of England's best blood and all that guff about county stock ! Could I stand by and do nothing, she asked, while a marriage between an Elliston and a Wivenhoe was in jeopardy ?

I said I thought I could. I said marriages were made in Heaven and not at the College of Heralds.

" Does it mean nothing to you that my daughter's heart should be broken ? "

" Yes," I said. " It does."

Then Lady Elliston :—

" Ronald is such a timid boy. He is shocked by the slightest thing. Across the footlights he sees in Miss Fossdyck an ideal woman, but what would his feelings be were he to meet her in the flesh ? He would recoil, Mr. Chalmers, recoil in horror."

" Good gracious ! " said I. " Do you think so ? "

" She would jar the refinement of his nature and in misery he would return to Margaret. It could not be otherwise."

" And what do you want me to do ? "

" Arrange for his disillusionment."

The plot was certainly ingenious and did not lack for courage, but I was astonished that either of these two ladies cared to face so grave a hazard. Alves, too, had a right to be considered, for it did not seem altogether chivalrous to introduce a boy to her for the purpose of awakening him, rudely or otherwise. It was only after some hesitation I spoke.

" I should like to know Meggie's feelings on the matter."

Lady Elliston and Mrs. Wivenhoe exchanged glances.

" Mr. Chalmers, it was Meggie herself who made the suggestion."

I started.

" Meggie knows ? "

" A lover's eyes see all."

" She sanctions it ? "

" She would do anything in the world to save Ronald."

I remembered how Meggie had said that for Ronald she would make any sacrifice, but where was her pride ? I flung the butt of my cigar into the grate.

" Very well, Lady Elliston," I said. " I'll think it over. If I decide to help, it will be for Meggie's sake, not for Ronald's.

In my opinion Ronald has behaved like a —never mind."

And with that I walked from the room. In the hall I saw Meggie.

She was alone—seated, but how could she avoid that, beneath a bough of mistletoe?

"Come and sit somewhere else," I said. "I want to talk to you."

"Why not here?" said she, patting the sofa at her side.

Meggie drew herself up.

"Mr. Chalmers, you are speaking of your hostess's son and the man who is destined to be my husband. Another such word and I shall call, 'Hola there!' to old George Wivenhoe, 'Hola, put me this varlet out!'"

"It's all very well to make a jest of it," I complained. "You and your generation have no fire, no feeling—nothing. You marry and give yourselves in marriage with as

"Come and mark for us, Mr. Chalmers, if it wouldn't

"Because I am an ordinary man with a proper appreciation for tradition."

"But it's Christmas," said she, "and you're a friend of the family. If the worst came to the worst, what's the odds?"

"On your own head be it," said I and plumped down beside her.

"You're miserable about something. Won't you confide in me?"

"I am not miserable. I'm just angry."

"Ah! Then you've been told—and you're annoyed at having to do something for someone else."

"Nothing of the kind, Meggie. I'm angry that you should be such a prideless fool. If you had to fall in love, why couldn't you fall in love with a man, instead of a pink and white simpleton?"

much enthusiasm as I'd eat—eat an ice."

"Nowadays one doesn't carry one's heart on one's sleeve," said she. "Granted imagination, you might have realized that what I am doing for Ronald is not a usual thing."

"I'd think more of you if you told him to go to the devil."

That great smile of hers came and stayed.

"But I'm sending him there under escort—am I not?"

I humped a shoulder.

"A girl of spirit wouldn't have any use for a second-hand lover—a man who has to be dragged up the altar steps by the hair of his head."

"Maybe," said Meggie, "but where love

is pride goes by the board. No one shall say I haven't given Ronald every chance."

"The whole thing," I said, "disgusts me."

"Then why did you promise to help?"

"I haven't promised."

"But you will."

"I suppose I shall," I replied, grudgingly.

"Why, Mr. Chalmers?"

Her face was near to mine. The mistletoe drooped above us—a waxen berry fell upon her smooth gold head and rolled to her lap.

"Why, Mr. Chalmers?" The words whispered round me.

I struggled against unworthy desire and vanquished it.

"I prefer to answer that in some other place and at some other time."

"'Go thy ways to a nunnery,'" said she. "Unlike me, you lack the courage of your affections."

O miserable night!

The campaign against me was launched at breakfast next morning, and within an hour I found myself seated in my car with Ronald beside me and the whole party gathered on the steps to speed our departure.

excite you too much," said Meggie.

"Farewell!" sang Mrs. Wivenhoe, in a manner that must have excited the jealousy of Tosti. Meggie jumped upon the running-board and, popping her head through the open window, kissed Ronald's cheek.

"Take care of him, Mr. Chalmers; he is very precious to me."

I growled something inarticulate and Ronald invited her to shut up.

Meggie smiled into my eyes.

"And bring me back a parrot," she pleaded.

"I don't believe you like Meggie, sir," said Ronald as we moved away, "but she's quite a good sort really."

"Oh, shut that window," said I, and drove to Town in silence.

I managed to get rid of Ronald during the afternoon and did not see him until dinner time at my flat in Duke Street. Rather bashfully he informed me that he had bought a box for "A Blank Cheque" and wondered if I would join him.

"Good heavens, boy," I groaned, "aren't you sick of it yet?"

"And never shall be," he said. "Will you come?"

It was what I was in Town for.

"Yes, I'll come."

He hesitated. Then:—

"I don't suppose there's any chance of your taking me round behind the scenes?"

Conscience smote me. Ideals are not so plentiful that we can afford to shatter them. But there was Meggie to consider—Meggie's future—and I *had* promised.

"If you like," I said.

Ronald sprang to his feet and seized me by both hands. Thanks poured from him in torrents. If I had given him the Kingdom of Heaven, New York City, and the British Fleet his gratitude could not have been greater.

"Sit down and eat your soup," I said. "Remember you're engaged to the best girl alive and don't be an ass."

IT was a wretched evening. We sat in that box while a great audience sniggered and nudged one another, guffawed, cried, and applauded. Nothing could shake the success of "A Blank Cheque on Eternity," not even the atrocious liberties Alves Fossdyck was taking with the script and her reading of her part. Alves was drunk with popularity. She was "manneristic," she fooled, she over-acted, she farced comedy and stressed emotion. She was utterly and completely wrong, and the audience adored her, cheered her, roared at her. And Ronald leaned over the side of the box and lapped it up like a cat before a saucer of cream.

"Did you ever see the like, sir?" he gasped as the curtain fell on the last act.

"I did not, and very soon you'll hear me say so."

I led the way through the iron pass door, across the stage, and down a dressing-room passage.

The door of Alves' room was open. Alves was saying:—

"Darling, how divine—no, did you? Honestly?" to a group of infatuated women.

Also she was swearing in an undertone at her dresser.

"Mrs. Knight, aouh! Give me the comb—your great hands——"

Then she saw me. The infatuated women backed out as before royalty.

Alves cried: "*Dar*ling—DARling," seized my face, kissed it in divers places, flung herself back in a chair, stamped her feet, and kicked a pair of heels into the air.

I borrowed a towel from Mrs. Knight to clean myself and looked at Ronald.

With lips parted, he stood in the doorway, breathing—just breathing. The poison was at work.

Alves said: "Come in, darling," and to me, "Who is it?"

I suppose I introduced them, for she went on:—

"Sit down, Ronald. Not on that slip, you baby fool. Move it, Mrs. Knight, or I'll scream. But he's sweet, he's poifect—he's peach candy, darling."

Alves Fossdyck affected certain Americanisms, although she had never penetrated nearer to the heart of the United States than the Savoy Hotel. If I had not been concerned with a grievance of my own I might have analysed the effects of her dynamic personality on a sensitive soul like Ronald Elliston's. That he was shaken there could be no doubt, but whether by indignation or disappointment it was impossible to say. Spellbound and in silence he sat watching Alves remove one make-up preparatory to assuming another. It must have been an illuminating experience. Even with her face shining with grease, Alves was distractingly pretty, a wild, savage little creature with the most perfect feet and ankles, the kindest heart, and the smoothest and roughest tongue in the kingdom.

"Why didn't you tell me you were in front, darling?" she cried. "It's death not to know."

I replied coldly that I had wanted to find out what she was up to.

"And what was I up to?"

"Doing your best to wreck the play," I answered. The towel slipped from her fingers.

"*Dar*ling!"

"And succeeding," I added.

"I'll die of tears if you mean it."

"I do mean it, Alves. You're clowning—you're moaning—you're playing havoc."

She looked at me with her astral eyes wide open, then turned to Ronald and screamed—shrieked. It was a wonder the ceiling did not fall.

Said Mrs. Knight, the dresser:—

"Think of your throat, dear."

"Wish I hadn't got a throat, wish I'd never been born. Gee! and I made that man's reputation." One more scream. "But it's true what he says—every word—I *am* playing havoc—but the audience doesn't know. I swear on my mother's head they don't. Only I know and he knows—pig that he is to say so. Peach Candy, darling, take me to Waterloo Bridge and push me over. I want to die. Not that dress, Mrs. Knight—the silver tissue. I am going out to supper, silly."

At the height of her outburst Ronald sprang to his feet and stood with clenched hands and breath hissing between shut teeth. Alves asked him if he wanted a drink. His reply was an inarticulate sound accompanied by a gesture. He took three paces across the room and faced me.

"S-S-Sir," he stammered, "ab-b-buse this lady again, and I sha'n't hold myself accountable."

I stared—amazed.

"I s-spose your criticism is inspired by professional jealousy, but if you don't want to be hit, let me tell you to l-l-look out." He turned from me as from a dog.

"Miss Fossdyck, I have seen this play thirteen times, and whatever this man says to the contrary, I say you're wonderful—*wonderful*—and I know what I'm talking about."

"Ronald," I implored, "don't be an ass."

Alves gestured me to be silent.

"Does he mean it?" she asked

"The fool," said I, "is infatuated."

"But it's too marvellous. The adorable person. Oh, darling, let him hit you once for my sake."

**Spellbound and in silence he sat watching Alves remove one make-up preparatory to assuming another. It must have been an illuminating experience.**

" Ronald," I said, sternly, " come home—at once."

" Never," he replied, " never until this lady dismisses me."

" I won't dismiss you," said she. " You're much too precious. Oh, let me show him to mother."

" Alves, leave that boy alone," I thundered. " He has done you no harm."

" But I wouldn't hurt him for a fortune. I was to have had supper with two Cabinet Ministers and their wives. Ring up the Embassy, Mrs. Knight, and say I'm going to dance with Peach Candy instead."

"His name," said I, "is Elliston, and he is affianced——"

Ronald took a step towards me, but Alves threw white arms about his neck. Her grey eyes were bright with laughter.

"Go," she beseeched me. "Go, ere worse befall you."

"I shall smack you in a minute. Brush the powder off that boy's coat and hand him over to me."

Then Ronald, chin out, brows down, very much a man:—

"I'm prepared to take the view, sir, that your behaviour is provoked by insanity. It would be better to retire now and avoid violence."

It was a miracle how he found the words. Sheer gasconade, of course, but there was an earnestness about him that was almost impressive. Alves Fossdyck fell back in her chair, racked and torn with laughter.

"Oh, keep it up," she implored. "It's the divinest thing that ever happened to me. Go on, my lovely Knight, cleave yon dramatist's helm and bring me his head upon a charger."

Ronald approached the dressing-room door, flung it open, and bowed.

"I am waiting," he announced, "but before you go p'r'aps you could lend me a second latch-key to your flat. I mean to say, I may be late."

"Oh, June!" cried Alves, who swore by the months of the year. "Take him outside, darling, till I've finished dressing."

Mrs. Knight shut us out.

Robbed of an audience, Ronald's eloquence departed from him and he looked at me sheepishly.

"Now, look here, Ronald," I said, "this won't do. If you weren't such a monumental ass, you'd see that Alves is laughing at you."

"Of course she is," was the unexpected retort, "but I don't care. Hers is a gorgeous laugh."

"Half the men in the country are mad about Alves, and she doesn't care a snap of the fingers for the lot."

"The more lucky me to take her out to supper."

"You'll make a fool of yourself."

"I shouldn't wonder," said he; "but haven't you ever made a fool of yourself over a girl?"

I was not going to be side-tracked.

"Then you mean to see it through?"

"Certainly. That is, if you'll lend me a fiver to pay for the supper. I've stupidly left myself rather short."

"And Meggie?" I queried.

"Let's take one thing at a time," said Ronald.

It was too much. I slapped a crumpled fiver into his palm.

"Take it and be damned," I said.

"Good night," said he.

But I had a Parthian arrow in my quiver.

"Alves never sups alone with a man. You will find her mother a most attentive woman."

"I'm more or less used to mothers," said he.

IT ended there—at least for a time it ended—to begin again at three a.m. the same night with Ronald in evening dress leaning over the rail at the foot of my bed. He looked happy by the light of a match held to a cigarette, but why he should have thought I would be happy too passes comprehension. He told me he had had "a wonderful time"—"too marvellous"—"and really her mother's an awfully good sort." As to Alves! Well, there were no words.

"I asked her to marry me, you know, but more for form's sake. She said she'd never marry a man she cared for because it wouldn't be fair to him. There's a lot in that—convinced me marriage is a mistake. Quite a mistake. Rather a cruel institution, in fact. Made me think. Now there's Meggie."

There was—I blinked and sat up.

"Meggie—one of the best of good sorts and a girl I really care for. But if marriage is a mistake it 'ud hardly be playing the game to marry her, would it—I mean if, as a result of marriage, she came to dislike me?"

Glimmerings of sense were apparent. She would—she undoubtedly would. My silence stimulated him.

"Now, sir, it occurred to me you'd be able to state my case a lot more clearly than I could. Put it up to her that I don't feel equal to the test—fond and devoted but unequal to the test. See what I mean?"

I saw and I agreed. From his point of view and from mine the suggestion was admirable, but what of hers? Gloom descended upon him.

"If she wants me to stick to it, of course I must, but let's give freedom a run, sir."

I sent him to bed and he slept. But I slept not.

THERE was consternation when, the following afternoon, I turned up alone at the Ellistons' country house. Lady Elliston was pouring out tea. Old George Wivenhoe was pouring out whisky.

"And where is Ronald?"

Careless of consequence I flung a grenade.

"He has taken Miss Fossdyck to 'Peter Pan.'"

Lady Elliston paused in the act of pouring

and aimed the spout of the teapot at my head.

" Miss Fossdyck—the actress ? "

" I followed your instructions and introduced them last night."

George Wivenhoe didn't bother about any soda—he swallowed the whisky neat.

" Slisch," it went. " Whowhoop," he said.

" And Ronald did not recoil ? "

I shook my head.

" He advanced. She advanced—accompanied by her mother they both advanced."

There was the clatter of a tea-cup and Meggie ran from the room.

The Bart came forward—eyes gleaming.

" What's this about Ronald ? And an actress—and you, Emily, causing them to be introduced ? "

For the first time on record Lady Elliston's courage failed.

" How was I to know, Harry ? "

The Bart's hand fell with a whack between her shoulder-blades. A jet of tea leapt across the Aubusson carpet.

" Damme ! I never credited you with so much sense. We'll make a man of Ronald yet."

Then from Mrs. Wivenhoe in a deep diapason :—

" You can say that when my daughter's happiness has been turned to ruin and to blight."

" Rot," said old George. " Rot, Madam. Blight be jiggered. Gel like Meggie's worth a dozen Ronalds."

" That," said Lady Elliston, " is a lie."

I left them to decide who was right.

In a corner of the hall I found Meggie face downward on a sofa, gold hair spilled across a cushion—shoulders shaking. A most affecting sight.

" You brought it on yourself," said I, harshly. " You'll get no pity from me."

" That you ? " came a muffled inquiry. " Half a second and I'll make room."

Her feet described a half circle. She presented to me a face reddened by partial suffocation.

" Tell me, please."

I did, and she nodded.

" In a vision last night I saw it all. But how did you manage so cleverly ? "

" I ? Manage ? It was nothing to do with me."

Her face glowed.

" I'm glad, for I was almost afraid you'd seen."

" Seen what ? "

" That if I'd broken off the engagement any other way there'd have been an awful fuss with the families."

" You—but it wasn't you who broke the engagement."

" No, but I did the arranging."

" Is this true ? " I demanded.

" Verily," said she. " I thought it was a good idea."

I had a futuristic impression of shafts of sunlight stabbing darkness.

" When did you think it was a good idea ? "

" The other day."

" Which other day ? "

" There's no such thing as a specified other day. The other day is a confidential measurement of time, sir, I mean to say, if you see what I mean."

Her smile was maddening.

" And you willingly involved me in a plot of this description ? "

" Well, I thought you'd like to help. After all, Ronald is much too young for any girl to marry."

" You've behaved atrociously," I cried. " If you thought that, why on earth did you agree to the engagement ? "

" To oblige," said she. " I am very obliging, you know."

" Then oblige me by not smiling while we're discussing a serious matter."

" I was smiling at the other serious discussion that's going on at the back of your eyes, sir."

What was the use ? Thoughts are better out than in.

" I suppose," I said, " I suppose you are well aware that I'm in love with you, Meggie ? "

" Yes, I noticed you were."

" When ? "

" The other day."

I took her by the wrists.

" Was it the same other day, Meggie ? Was it ? Answer me. *Was it ?* "

" It might have been."

" Meggie," said I, " I give you fair warning. I shall kiss you in a minute."

She suddenly frowned.

" Jilted I may be," she said, and suddenly smiled, " but at least I have something to look forward to."

# "Days of My Life"

## By

# H. RIDER HAGGARD

In this instalment the Author takes up the story of his career after an interval spent in South Africa.

## II.—YOUTH (*continued*).

WHEN I reached home from South Africa everyone was very glad to see me, especially my mother, but my father did not welcome my reappearance with whole-hearted enthusiasm. He remarked with great candour that I should probably become "a waif and a stray," or possibly (my taste for writing being already known) "a miserable penny-a-liner." I am sure I do not wonder at his irritation, which, were I in his place to-day, I should certainly share.

All of these things, and others, he told me in the course of a row which arose over the loss of a gigantic turtle which I had brought home from the Island of Ascension, where I had visited my brother John, who at that time was first lieutenant of H.M.S. *Flora*. The Island of Ascension, by the way, where they catch these turtles on the beach and store them in tanks, is a very interesting spot, for there one sees a part of the world in the making. On the top of a peak is a green area of soil that I presume owes its origin to the droppings of sea-birds. Below is bare rock. This area must have been formed within recent times, say during the last five hundred thousand years, and in another million or so of years doubtless it will have spread all over the island. The processes of Nature are distinctly slow.

In some mysterious way my turtle got lost in the London Docks. Personally, I thought the occurrence fortunate, for what would have been done with the creature if I had succeeded in conveying it safely to Bradenham Hall still alive and flapping, I cannot conceive. Imagine the local butcher confronted with a turtle; imagine the domestic cook and the quantities of soup that would have resulted, if it ever got so far as soup. I pointed all this out to my father, but he took another view. He wanted his turtle, and said so, often, and alas! it had vanished in the London Docks. Probably a steward sold it to a City company on the sly. A sportive passenger on the ship made a rhyme on the matter. It began:—

*"'Tis true, O my father, from distant lands*
*I've come, a bad penny, back on your hands,*
*But when once you have tasted this nice green fat,*
*You won't care, O my Parent, one kipper for that."*

The trouble was that he never did "taste that nice green fat."

However, things righted themselves by degrees, as somehow they do generally when one is young and not afraid to take chances. To begin with, not long after my arrival in England I did the wisest and best deed of my life and engaged myself to be married.

The young lady whom I met thirty-two years ago, and who is to-day, God be thanked, living and strong enough to have won prizes in a croquet tournament last week, was named Louisa Margitson, the only surviving child of Major Margitson, of the 19th Regiment, and of Ditchingham House in this county where we now live.

My dear wife was a schoolfellow of my sister Mary, and was staying with her at Bradenham when we met. After a short acquaintance we became engaged, and at first all went well enough; subsequently, however, her guardians, for she was not yet of age, after consenting to her engagement, reconsidered the matter and wished her to break it off. I do not altogether blame

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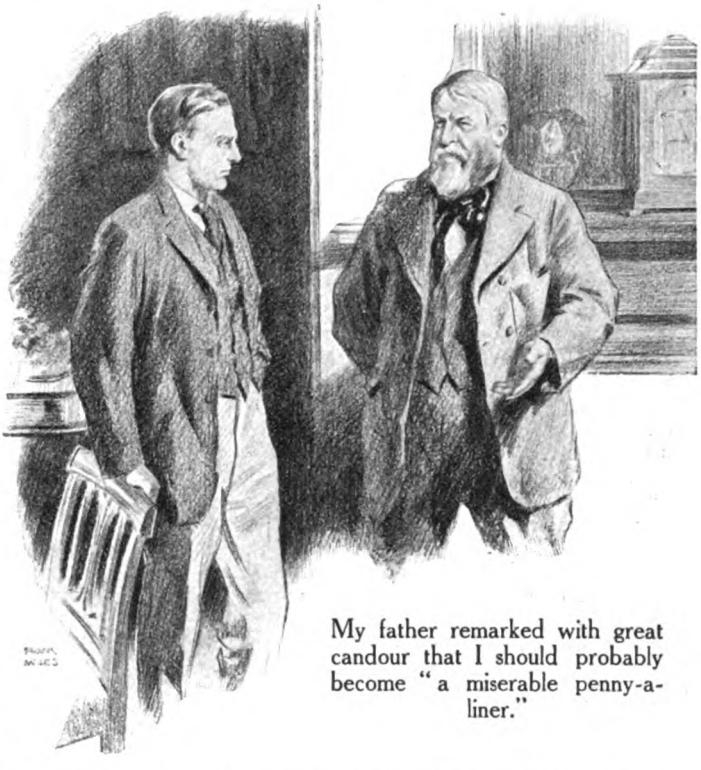
them, since at the moment my prospects were not particularly brilliant. As it chanced, however, my wife, perhaps the most upright and straightforward woman whom I ever knew, was not one of a nature to play fast and loose in such matters. She declined, whereupon one of her guardians, who was a lawyer, made her a ward in Chancery. Well do I remember appearing before Vice-Chancellor Malins, a kindly old gentleman and man of the world, upon whose gouty toe I inadvertently trod when shaking hands with him. He soon sifted the matter out and approved of the engagement, making certain directions as to settlements, etc. The net result of the whole business was that, including the cost of the settlements, a very moderate estate was mulcted in law expenses of a sum of nearly three thousand pounds!

In after days I and my wife's relations, with most of whom, by the way, I never had any difference at all, as they were no parties to these proceedings, became and remained the best of friends. So I wish to say no more of the matter except that I regret those moneys which went in quite useless law costs. The end of the business was that after about a year of these excursions and alarms we were duly married on August 11th, 1880, I being twenty-four and my wife within a few months of twenty-one, and departed from this house to Norwich in a carriage drawn by four grey horses with postilions. This is interesting, as I believe it must have been one of the last occasions upon which postilions were used for such a purpose in England, except, of course, in the case of Royal personages. At any rate, I have never seen or heard of them since in this connection, and how we came to have them I do not quite know. I can see them now in their grey dress and velvet caps touching up the grey steeds with their short whips. We made quite a sensation on our thirteen-mile journey to and through Norwich, but, oh! were we not glad when it was all over!



My father remarked with great candour that I should probably become "a miserable penny-a-liner."

## III.—FIRST ESSAYS IN AUTHORSHIP.

My first book—Some prophecies fulfilled—How I became a novelist—The story of "Dawn"—"The Witch's Head"—Migration to London.

AFTER my marriage I made another visit to South Africa, and on our return to England in the autumn of 1881 we went to stay at Bradenham for a while. I do not remember anything that we did there except that we were at the Sandringham ball. A note in my wife's diary mentions that the Princess, now Queen Alexandra, "looked lovely in pearl-grey satin, and was the prettiest woman in the room with the exception of Lady Lonsdale."

Before Christmas we moved to a furnished house at Norwood. Here, having all my way still to make in the world, I set to

work in earnest. First of all I entered myself at Lincoln's Inn, but found to my disgust that before I could do so I was expected to pass an examination in Latin, English History, and, I think, Arithmetic. My Latin I had practically forgotten and my English History dates were somewhat to seek. I represented to the Benchers that after having filled the office of the Master of the High Court of the Transvaal this entrance examination was perhaps superfluous, but they were obdurate in the matter. So I set to work, and, with the assistance of a crammer, in a month learned more Latin than I had done all the time I was at school; indeed, at the end of a few weeks I could read Cæsar fluently and Virgil not so ill. The end of it was that I passed the examination at the head of the batch who went up with me, or so I was given to understand.

ANOTHER thing that I did was to write my first book, "Cetewayo and His White Neighbours: or Remarks on Recent Events in Zululand, Natal, and the Transvaal." It contained about two hundred and fifty closely-printed pages in the first of its editions and represented a great amount of labour. I was determined that it should be accurate, and to ensure this I purchased all the Blue-books dealing with the period of which I was treating, some of which I still possess, and made a précis of them.

But it is one thing for an unknown person to write a book of this character and quite another for him to persuade anyone to publish it. I find among my papers a pencil draft of a letter which I sent to many publishers. It runs:—

> "I write to inquire if you are inclined to undertake the publication of a short work I am now finishing. It is the result of some six years' experience in South Africa in official and private capacities, and contains amongst other things a private history of the annexation of the Transvaal, which, as I was on Sir T. Shepstone's staff at the time, I am qualified to write.
>
> "The parts of the book, however, which would, I think, ensure the sale at the present moment, both here and in the Colonies, are the chapters dealing with the proposed grant of responsible government to Natal and the question of the reinstatement of Cetewayo. As you are no doubt aware, the ex-king will visit England very shortly, when I think an opportunely-published work on the subject would find a ready sale.
>
> "The book is written in as interesting a style as I can command and would be published under my own name.
>
> "Awaiting the favour of a reply,
>
> "I am, etc."

Needless to say the reply always came, but notwithstanding the tempting bait of "the interesting style" its character may be guessed. Nobody wished to have anything to do either with Cetewayo or his white neighbours.

At length I was faced with the alternative of putting the results of my labours into the fire, or of paying for their production in book form. A letter from Trübner and Co. dated May 18th, 1882, informs me that my MS. will make a volume of three hundred and twenty pages "like enclosed specimen," and "if you will send us a cheque for the sum of fifty pounds sterling we will undertake to produce an edition of seven hundred and fifty copies."

I sent the cheque, although at the time I could ill afford it, and in due course the work appeared. On the whole it was extremely well received by such papers as chose to review it seriously. Some of these notices I still possess, favourable and unfavourable.

Except for any influence it may have had upon certain leading minds and organs of opinion, the book at this time proved a total failure. At this date (1883) an eager public had absorbed one hundred and fifty-four copies of the work. Say Messrs. Trübner:—

> "You will no doubt consider the account a most unsatisfactory one, as we do, seeing that we are out of pocket to the extent of eighty-two pounds fifteen shillings and fivepence. Against this, of course, we hold the fifty pounds advanced by you, but we fear that we are never likely to recover the balance, thirty-two pounds fifteen shillings and fivepence."

As it happened, however, Messrs. Trübner did in the end recover their thirty-two pounds. When I became known through other works of a different character the edition sold out. Perhaps the public bought it thinking it was a novel; at any rate, I have come across a letter from a melancholy youth who made that mistake.

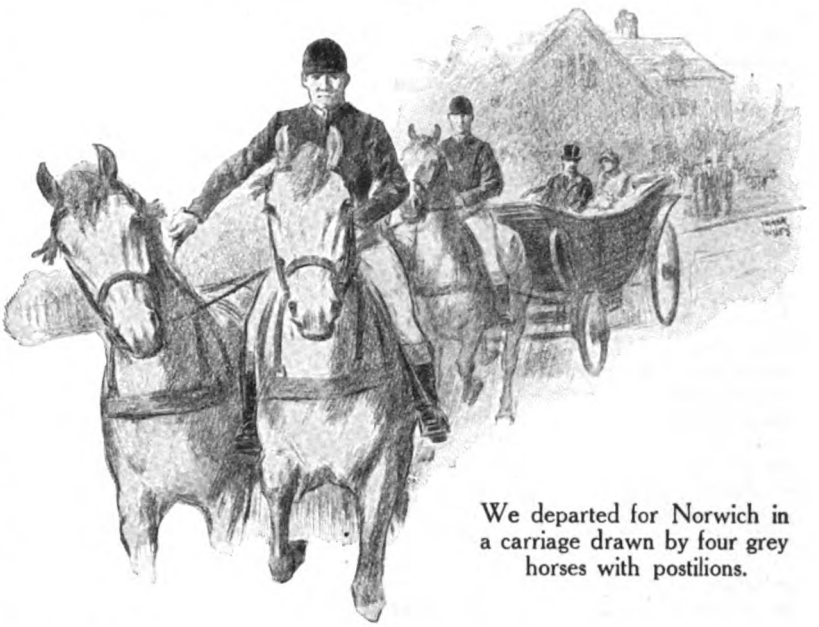
Since that time there have been other and cheaper editions, and in 1899, at the time of the Boer War, that part of the book that deals with the Transvaal was republished at one shilling and sold to the extent of some thirty thousand copies.

To this day there is a certain demand for the book. That it has already been extensively used by writers dealing with this epoch of African affairs in works of reference and elsewhere I have reason to know, although these have not always acknowledged the source of their information and judgments.

So it comes about that my only effort as an historian was not made in vain, although at

first it seemed futile and fruitless enough. I may add that certain prophecies set down in its pages in 1882 have since that time been remarkably fulfilled.

"If they" (*i.e.*, those who direct the destinies of the Empire) "do not" (take certain steps alluded to above) "it is now quite within the bounds of possibility that they may one day have to face a fresh Transvaal rebellion, only on a ten times larger scale."



We departed for Norwich in a carriage drawn by four grey horses with postilions.

And again, "unless they" (*i.e.*, South African problems) "are treated with more honest intelligence, and on a more settled plan than it has hitherto been thought necessary to apply to them, the British taxpayer will find that he has by no means heard the last of that country and its wars."

Some twenty years after I wrote these words, England did have to face a Transvaal war on a ten times larger scale and the British taxpayer did hear that he was called upon to pay a bill of some three hundred millions sterling. Also about twenty thousand of our countrymen, among them a young nephew of my own, were summoned to lay down their lives on the African veld.

Whilst we were at Norwood a little incident occurred which resulted in my becoming a writer of fiction. At the church which my wife and I attended we saw sitting near to us one Sunday a singularly beautiful and pure-faced young lady. Afterwards we agreed that this semi-divine creature (on whom to the best of my knowledge I have never set eyes again from that day to this) ought to become the heroine of a novel. So then and there we took paper and, each of us, began to write the said novel. I think that after she had completed two or three folio sheets my wife ceased from her fictional labours. But, growing interested, I continued mine, which resulted in the story called "Dawn."

Years afterwards, in 1894 indeed, on the occasion of the issue of one of the numerous editions of that tale, I inserted the following little dedication :—

AFTER MANY YEARS
I dedicate this my first story
to
That Unknown Lady,
once seen, but unforgotten, the
Mould and model of Angela,
The magic of whose face turned my mind
To the making of books.

HERE I may as well tell the history of this book. Some of it, or rather of the first draft of it, I think I wrote at Norwood. Towards Christmas of 1882 my wife and I made up our minds to return to this house at Ditchingham, which was standing empty and furnished, while I pursued my studies for the Bar. Hither we came accordingly a little while before the birth of my eldest surviving child. She was named Angela after the heroine of my novel, which shows that at this time it must either have been written or well advanced.

There appear to be three drafts of this work, the first of which (incomplete) is named "Angela" after the heroine; the second, five hundred and fifty-four closely-written foolscap sheets long (!), estimated, I observe, upon the title-page to print into about a thousand pages, called "There Remaineth a Rest"; and the third bound MS. (unnamed), four hundred and ninety-three foolscap sheets. The history of them is briefly as follows. With pain and labour I wrote the work—five hundred and fifty-four

foolscap sheets do take some labour in the actual matter of calligraphy and without considering the mental effort. Then I sent the result to sundry publishers: who they were I entirely forget. Evidently, however, Smith and Elder must have been one of them, as is shown by the allusion to James Payn, so long associated with that firm, in a letter from the late Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson which I shall presently quote.

THESE publishers, or their readers, had no great opinion of " Angela " or " There Remaineth a Rest," by whichever title it was then called. After these rebuffs most people would have put that mighty mass of manuscript into the fire or an upstairs cupboard. But I must have been a persistent young man thirty years or so ago, and I did not take this course. On the contrary, I consulted Mr. Trübner, with whom I had become personally acquainted since the publication of " Cetewayo and His White Neighbours." Indeed, he and I struck up some kind of a friendship, as is shown by the fact that he gave me his photograph in a little olive-wood frame, which photograph has stood on a shelf in my room from that day to this. It is a clever old face which is pictured there, and he was a clever old man. He was good enough to take some interest in the story and to suggest that it should be sent to the late Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson for his opinion. This was done, and on April 27th, 1883, Jeaffreson sent me his opinion, which is so thorough and able that I will quote from it, merely omitting his detailed criticism of the work.

" 24, Carlton Road,
Maida Vale, N.W.
27th April, '83.

" DEAR SIR,

" I have read your story deliberately and read it with considerable interest, which would of course have been greater had I read it in type.

" Payn was not wrong. Your opening chapters have a superabundance of action, and several highly dramatic positions, but they lack dramatic interest, *i.e.*, the interest that comes from an exhibition of the influence of character upon character. Novels being what they are just now, it is small praise to say that Angela's love-story is better than two-thirds of the stories that are published. I could say much more in its favour. Still, I urge you not to publish it in its present rude form. Indeed, the story has caused me to take so much interest in its writer that I could almost *entreat* you not to publish it.

" I take it you are a young man. You are certainly a novice in literature: and like most beginners in the really difficult art of novel-writing you have plied your pen under the notion that novels are dashed off. Inferior novels are so written, but you have the making of a good novelist in you, if you are seriously bent on being one. It would therefore be ill for you in several ways to make your *début* with a tale that would do you injustice. I don't counsel you to try again with new materials. I advise you to make your present essay what it might be made, a work of art and a really good performance.

" You have written it with your *left hand* without strenuous pains; you must rewrite it with your *right hand*, throwing all your force into it. If you produce it in its present crude state you will do so only to regret in a few weeks you did not burn it. If you rewrite it slowly with your right hand—suppressing much, expanding much, making every chapter a picture by itself, and polishing up every sentence so that each page bears testimony to the power of its producer—the story will be the beginning of such a literary career as I conceive you to be desirous of running. Get the better of the common notion that novels may be dashed off—by remembering how often Lord Lytton rewrote ' Pelham,' thinking over every part of it, now compressing and now expanding the narrative, before he ventured to give it to the world. Go to the Charles Dickens rooms in the S. Kensington Museum and observe the erasures, the insertions, the amendments of every paragraph of his writing. . . ."

*Here follows a long and able criticism of the story.*

" Having read your MS. I have packed it and will do anything you like with it—with the exception of sending it to a publisher in its present state. You will succeed in literary enterprise if it be your ambition to do so.

" Your story disposes me to think you have that ambition. It also causes me to hope that I may make the author's acquaintance. If you call on me when you are in town I shall be delighted to ask your pardon for writing to you with such unmannerly frankness and self-sufficiency.

" Believe me to be, my dear Sir,
" Yours very sincerely,
" JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON."

What an extraordinarily kind heart must have been that of Mr. Jeaffreson! He was a very busy man, yet he found time, on behalf of an individual totally unknown to him or to anybody else in this country,

to labour through several hundred not too legible sheets of manuscript and to write a masterly criticism on their contents. Moreover, for all this trouble he refused to accept any reward. Certainly it has been my fortune to make acquaintance with much malice in the world, but on the other hand I have met with signal kindness at the hands of those engaged in literary pursuits, and of such kindnesses I can recall no more striking example than this act of Mr. Jeaffreson, of whom I shall always entertain the most affectionate memory.

WELL, I took his advice. From a tiny note on the first page of the manuscript it would seem that I began to rewrite "Dawn," or "Angela," as it was then called, on May 15th, 1883, and finished the last of the four hundred and ninety-three foolscap sheets on September 5th of the same year. That is, in just under four months, in addition to my legal studies and other occupations and the time taken in attending in London to eat my dinners at Lincoln's Inn, I wrote nearly two hundred thousand words. Nowadays the average length of a novel may be put at seventy-five thousand words, or even less, though mine are longer. But in the early 'eighties, when stories were brought out in three volumes and readers had more patience than at present, it was otherwise. I toiled at that book morning, noon, and night, with the result that at length my eyesight gave out and I was obliged to finish the writing of it in a darkened room.

Still, I did finish it notwithstanding the pain in my eyes, and then went to London to see an oculist. To my relief he told me I was not going blind as I feared, but that the trouble came from the brain, which was overworked. He ordered me complete rest and change, during which I was not to read anything. So we went for a month to Southwold, where we took lodgings. The only occupation that I had there was to walk, or, when this was not feasible, like a child to throw a ball against the wall of the room and see how often I could catch it on the rebound. However, the treatment proved effective.

The book being finished, or nearly finished, and the heroine, Angela, rescued from the untimely death to which she was consigned in the first version and happily married to her lover, once more I sought the assistance of Cordy Jeaffreson, who gave me a letter introducing me to Mr. Arthur Blackett, of the firm of Messrs. Hurst and Blackett. It runs :—

"DEAR BLACKETT,—

"Some months since I read the MS. of a novel of which the bearer of these presents, Mr. Rider Haggard, of Ditchingham House, Bungay, is looking for a publisher. Mr. Haggard having distinguished himself in another field of literature, I was not surprised to find his first essay to prose fiction a thing of no ordinary power. It was a tale of character, pathos, incident, and *new ground*; so good that had it been less so I should have advised him to publish it as it came to me. The goodness of the story, however, made me urge him to rewrite it, so that every chapter should be in harmony with its best and strongest parts. He has acted on my advice, and if the result of his renewed labour answers my anticipation, he has produced a work that will make your reader rub his hands and say, 'This will do.'"

Messrs. Hurst and Blackett wrote to me, and well do I remember the jubilation with which I read the letter :—

"We shall be very happy to undertake the publication of your novel on the following terms. To produce the work at our own expense and risk. To pay you the sum of forty pounds on the sale of four hundred copies and thirty pounds on the sale of every hundred copies after. The title 'Angela' has been used before. . . ."

Needless to say I accepted the offer with gratitude and promised to find another title. Three days later the agreement arrived under which I sold the copyright to Messrs. Hurst and Blackett for a period of one year only from the date of publication. In their covering letter they informed me that they only proposed to print five hundred copies in the three-volume form, leaving me at liberty to make any arrangements I liked for a cheap edition, if one should be demanded.

My criticism on "Dawn," considered as a whole, that is so far as I recollect it, for I have not re-read the book for many years, is that it ought to have been cut up into several stories. However, it has pleased, and apparently still continues to please, a vast number of persons, and not long ago I was much amused to see in an article in *The Times* that at Peking—or Hong-Kong—it is one of the favourite subjects of study among the Chinese students of English literature. Perhaps an old aunt of mine, who still lives at the age of nearly a hundred, was right when she declared that the book was too full of "amateur villains."

However, in due course it appeared in charming type such as we do not get in novels nowadays, and three nice volumes

bound in green, which I admire as I write. Certain of the reviews of it still remain pasted in a book. They were not very many nearly thirty years ago, or perhaps, as there were no Press-cutting Agencies, one did not see them. On the whole, however, they seem to have been fairly favourable. Since 1883 I have read hundreds, if not thousands, of reviews of my books, good, bad, and indifferent, but I can safely say that few, if any of them, have pleased me more than that which appeared of "Dawn" in *The Times*.

"'Dawn,'" said *The Times*, "is a novel of merit far above the average. From the first page the story arrests the mind and arouses the expectation. . . . This is, we repeat, a striking and original novel, breathing an elevated if somewhat exaggerated tone."

I wonder who wrote that notice. Be he living, which is scarcely probable, or dead, I offer him my gratitude. And yet I know not whether I should be grateful to this kindly critic, since his words, more than any other circumstances, encouraged me to try another novel.

My little son kneeled upon the seat and stared at the Thames, asking many questions.

As regards "Dawn" itself, it was more or less of a failure—of course I mean at that time, for in after years it became extraordinarily successful.

The new novel upon which I embarked ultimately appeared under the title of "The Witch's Head." Failing to find any magazine that would undertake it serially, in the end I published it with Messrs. Hurst and Blackett on practically the same terms as they had offered me for "Dawn." Although, except for the African part, it is not in my opinion so good a story as "Dawn," it was extremely well received and within certain limits very successful.

The notices of "The Witch's Head" naturally delighted me; indeed, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century they still make pleasant reading. Also they caused the book to go quickly out of print and to be pirated in America. But this success would not tempt my publishers to reissue it in a cheaper form, a venture that they thought too risky. I hawked the work about and ultimately found some other publishers, who have long since ceased to publish, who agreed to bring it and "Dawn" out in a two-shilling edition and nobly promised me one-third of the profits. But in that generous agreement was a little clause that afterwards nearly proved my ruin. It bound me to allow this firm to republish any other novel I might write during the five following years in the same form and on the same terms. To such a document as this in my ignorance—there was no Authors' Society in those days—did I set my hand, with results that shall be told later. These, however, did not alarm me at the time, if I really considered them, as, having then passed my final examination for the Bar

without any assistance in the way of coaching, I determined to abandon the writing of fiction and devote myself entirely to my profession.

Three works had I produced—namely, one history and two long novels. The history had cost me fifty pounds to publish, and for the two novels I had received exactly the same sum in all; in short the net returns were at that time *nothing*, and this for books that have since sold by the ten thousand copies, not to mention pirated editions. Thus I find that during six months of the year in which I am writing four thousand two hundred and four copies of "Dawn" and five thousand six hundred and fifty-six copies of "The Witch's Head" were sold in a cheap edition besides others at a higher price, which, as these works were written about twenty-eight years ago, is not a total to be despised.

To return: had it not been for a curious chance my literary efforts would have ended with the publication of "The Witch's Head," and probably by now my labours at the Bar, in this or some other land, would almost have obliterated them from my memory. But as it happened I read in one of the weekly papers a notice of Stevenson's "Treasure Island" so laudatory that I procured and studied that work, and was impelled by its perusal to try and write a book for boys.

Outside of this matter of my attempts at fiction I have little to add as to our life at Ditchingham before we migrated to London, when I began to practise at the Bar.

My recollection of this period is that it was rather lonely, at any rate for me, since my friends were African and Africa was far away. However, I worked very hard, as indeed I had done without intermission since I was a rather idle boy at school, both at writing and the study of the Law.

I was determined to make a success in the world in one way or another, and that of a sort which would cause my name to be remembered for long after I had departed from the world, and my difficulty was to discover in which way this could best be done; in short, to search out the line of least resistance. So I possessed my soul in patience and worked and worked and worked.

Some pleasures I had, however. My journeys to London to eat my dinners at Lincoln's Inn were a change. So were the examinations, though these I faced with fear and trembling, having read up for them entirely by myself, which I imagine few people do.

I think we left Ditchingham at the beginning of 1885. Now, with a wife and three children, I was practically beginning life again in a small furnished house in West Kensington at the age of twenty-eight or thereabouts.

I remember, as one does remember trifles, that we drove in a railway bus from Liverpool Street to the West Kensington house, which personally I had not seen. We passed down the Embankment, and my little son, whom I was destined to lose, kneeled upon the seat of the bus and stared at the Thames, asking many questions.

After my arrival in London, I began to attend the Probate and Divorce Court. Soon I found, however, that if I was to obtain a footing in that rather close borough I must do so through a regular gate, and entered into an arrangement with Bargrave, now Sir Henry Bargrave Deane, to work in his chambers. He was a connection of mine, my cousin, Major George Haggard, having married his sister.

## IV.—"KING SOLOMON'S MINES."

Seeking a publisher—Andrew Lang and "King Solomon's Mines"—Stories of "Merry Andrew"—"The most literary man in England or America"—Publication and instant success of "King Solomon's Mines."

WHETHER I wrote "King Solomon's Mines" before or after I entered his chambers I cannot now remember, but I think it must have been before. At any rate, I recollect that we brought up from Ditchingham a certain pedestal writing-desk which had always been in the house and has returned thither, for it now stands in my wife's bedroom, and added it to the somewhat exiguous furniture of our hired abode. It stood in the dining-room, and on it in the evenings, for my days were spent in the Temple, I wrote "King Solomon's Mines." I think the task occupied me about six weeks. When the tale was finished I hawked it round to sundry publishers, Hurst and Blackett among them, if I remember right, none of whom thought it worth bringing out.

At length, I know not how, the manuscript, which to-day presents a somewhat battered

appearance, reached the late W. E. Henley, who appears to have brought it to the notice of Mr. Andrew Lang. How I first came into contact with my friend Andrew Lang, that is, where and when I met him, I cannot recall.

But when the following letter of Lang's was written—it is only dated "Sunday"—I gather from its tone that I had made his personal acquaintance. Its subject is "King Solomon's Mines," and it runs:—

"Dear Mr. Rider Haggard,—

"I have got as far as Sir Henry's duel with the king. Seldom have I read a book with so much pleasure; I think it perfectly delightful. The question is, what is the best, whereby I mean the coiniest, way to publish it? As soon as possible I will find out what Harpers' *Boys' Magazine* is able to do. I believe that all Boys' magazines pay hopelessly badly. There is so much invention and imaginative power and knowledge of African character in your book, that I almost prefer it to 'Treasure Island.'"

The rest of the letter deals with possible methods of bringing out the work.

Lang's next letter on the subject is dated October 3rd, and shows that by now we were on more or less intimate terms.

"Dear Rider Haggard,—

"Many thanks for 'K. S. M.' How grand the map is. . . . Abstain from politics; let civilization die decently as die it must, and as we have no fight in us. I don't belong to the Voting classes. *Ni Elettori ni Eletti.*

"Yours very truly,

"A. LANG.

"P.S.—My people with whom I have been in Galloway prefer 'Dawn' to 'The Witch's Head.' I don't. 'Dawn' is too steep, especially Lady Bellamy, and George, and Philip, and the heroine. The *writing* and the sentiment pleased me very much, but I barred the *Astral Body*."

PERHAPS before I go any further I should try to give some estimate of Andrew Lang, whose character I have had opportunities of observing through many years. Take him all in all I think him one of the sweetest-natured and highest-minded men whom it has ever been my privilege to know, although a certain obtrusive honesty which will out, and an indifferent off-handedness of manner, has prevented him from becoming generally popular. Moreover, he has always been supposed to be somewhat of a mocker and *farceur*, as is exemplified in his Press nickname of "Merry Andrew."

Of his abilities I speak with some diffidence. On all hands he is admitted to be, perhaps, the soundest and ablest critic of his time, but when it comes to his place as an historian or as a student and recorder of matters connected with myth, ritual, and religion, I find myself incompetent to judge of his real status, which doubtless the Future will decide, though, personally, I believe it will be a very high one. On such matters, however, only experts can express opinions of real value. Lang never claimed to be a creator, and whenever he sets to work to create, which he has not done of late years, his wide knowledge and his marvellous memory of everything he has read—and little worth studying in ancient or modern literature has escaped him—prove positive stumbling-blocks in his path. I noticed this particularly when we were evolving "The World's Desire." With that modesty which so often distinguishes those who have much to be proud of, he once described himself to me as "A hodman of letters," a description that may be paralleled by Mrs. Lynn Linton's rather sharp saying, to myself, I believe, although of this I am not sure, that "Andrew Lang would be the greatest writer in the language if only he had something to write about." The fact is, of course, that he has always had too much. Like the amorous Frenchman, he has ever been wont to *éparpiller son cœur* upon a hundred subjects.

The truth is that Lang is *par excellence* a *littérateur* of the highest sort, perhaps the most literary man in England or America. When he is not reading he is writing, and he writes more easily than he talks, at any rate to most people.

Of his extraordinary readiness I need say little, as it is known to all men. Still, as it may be forgotten when these words are published, if that ever happens, I will give two instances. Once he called on me; we were going for a walk together, but I was not ready to start. So he asked for paper, and in half an hour or so finished a leading article, I think it was for *The Daily News*, which he sent straight to the office by a cabman, to appear without the submission of a proof. I read that article afterwards; it was on some Shakespearean subject which involved many allusions and much quotation. I believe that it contained no error.

On another occasion I was travelling with him from St. Andrews to Edinburgh, and Dr. Boyd, better known as A. K. H. B., was our fellow-voyager. He was a great conversationalist and talked to Lang almost without ceasing. Presently Lang took off

the tall hat he was wearing, placed it on his knee, produced paper and pencil, set the paper on the crown of the hat, and began to write like a spiritualist automatist, if that is the right word, all the time keeping up a flow of argument and conversation with A. K. H. B. At Edinburgh I saw him post the results, without re-reading, to the Editor of *The Saturday Review*. The article appeared in due course without his seeing a proof, and written in his usual clear and beautiful style.

**Presently Lang took off the tall hat he was wearing, placed it on his knee, and began to write.**

Such is the professional man, but of the friend I know not what to say, save that I reckon it as one of the privileges of my life to be able to call him by that much misused name; the tenderest, the purest, and the highest-minded of human creatures, one from whom true goodness and nobility of soul radiate in every common word and act, though often half-hidden in a jest, the most perfect of gentlemen, such is Andrew Lang.

To return to the history of "King Solomon's Mines." Ultimately that book found its way to Messrs. Cassell, recommended to them, I believe, by Mr. Henley. Subsequently Henley reproached me with having taken it out of his hands and said that he could have got me much better terms. But I never did take it out of his hands; indeed, I never knew that it was in his hands. If my memory serves me, I heard direct from Messrs. Cassell, informing me that they would publish the book and asking me to call *re* the agreement.

At any rate I called, and in that great building saw a business-like editor whose name I never knew. He pointed out that the company was prepared to offer me an alternative agreement; the first of the two agreements conveyed the copyright to Messrs. Cassell in return for a sum of, I think, one hundred pounds paid down. The second offered me fifty pounds on account of royalties, to be calculated "at the rate of ten per cent. of the published price of the book on all copies sold by them during the continuance of the copyright, reckoning thirteen copies to the twelve."

After my previous experiences as an author one hundred pounds on the nail had great attractions. I had no particular belief in the story, which I had thrown off in my leisure hours as a mere *jeu d'esprit*, especially after its rejection in other quarters. Even Mr. Lang's kind expression of opinion carried no conviction to my mind, for I did not understand all that it meant coming from such a source. I set him down as an amiable gentleman with a taste for savages and boys' books; it did not occur to me that he saw such things every day and that when he wrote to one who was practically a stranger that he almost preferred this particular boys' book to "Treasure Island" the compliment was high and indeed extraordinary. So after a brief moment of reflection I told the business-like editor that I would sell the copyright for one hundred pounds, and he departed to fetch the agreement.

As it chanced, however, there sat in the corner of the room a quiet clerk whom I had never even noticed. When the editor

had departed this unobtrusive gentleman addressed me.

"Mr. Haggard," he said, in a warning voice, "if I were you I would take the other agreement."

Then, hearing some noise, once more he became absorbed in his work, and I understood that the conversation was not to be continued.

Still a moment remained for thought.

"Why the dickens," I reflected to myself, "did he say that to me? He must have had some reason." The business-like editor re-entered the room bearing the document in his hand.

"I have changed my mind," I said, as he presented it to me; "I will not sell the copyright; I will take the royalty agreement."

Undoubtedly the quiet clerk in the corner, who was acquainted with the estimate that had been formed of the book by his employers, did me a very good turn, as did my knowledge of men when I acted so promptly on his hint.

The royalty that I accepted was, of course, a wretched one. It ought to have been at least twice as much, at any rate after the sale of a certain number of copies, but it was infinitely better than the acceptance of a small sum down for the copyright of "King Solomon's Mines," of which the sale has been very great and at present shows signs of increase rather than of diminution.

Many years later this gentleman wrote reminding me of the incident and forwarding a book that he had published.

"King Solomon's Mines," which was produced as a five-shilling book, proved an instant success. It was published about the beginning of October, and on December 9th Messrs. Cassell wrote to me that they had already sold five thousand copies more or less, a large sale for a boys' book by a practically unknown man. I wonder how many copies they have sold up to the time of writing. In one form and another the total must run to hundreds of thousands.

BEFORE the book appeared we had gone down to Norfolk for part of the Long Vacation, not to Ditchingham, which was let, but to a farmhouse at Denton adjoining a farm of our own, where I employed my holiday in writing "Allan Quatermain," the continuation of "King Solomon's Mines." One day I chanced to visit the little town of Bungay and there to see a copy of *The Saturday Review*, which contained a two-column notice of the latter work. It was written by Lang, although this I did not know at the time. With delight my eyes fell upon such sentences as "All through the battle piece 'The Last Stand of the Greys' Mr. Haggard, like Scott at Flodden, 'never stoops his wing,'" and "to tell the truth we would give many novels, say eight hundred (that is about the yearly harvest), for such a book as 'King Solomon's Mines.'"

I went back to the farm that night feeling sure that my book was going to succeed. A week or so later I received a note from Lang in which he says, "*The Spectator* in a 'middle' gives you more praise than *I* did, and is neither known personally to you, I fancy, nor an amateur of savages, like me. I hope they will give a review also. . . . I never read anything in *The Spectator* before with such pleasure."

One day I took the manuscript of "King Solomon's Mines" to be bound by Mr. H. Glaisher, the bookseller. In the carriage of the Underground Railway I perceived an old lady engaged in a close, indeed an almost ferocious, study of the map printed at the beginning of the printed volume which rested on her knees. This was too much for me. Drawing the original map from my pocket I placed it on *my* knee—we were seated opposite to each other—and began to study it with like attention. The old lady looked up and saw. She stared first at her map and then at mine, and stared, and stared. Twice she opened her mouth to speak, but I suppose was too shy, nor did I, apparently absorbed in the contemplation of my map, written in blood upon a dirty piece of torn linen, the shirt tail of Don José da Silvestra, give her the slightest encouragement. The end of it was that she seemed to come to the conclusion that that railway carriage, in which we were alone together, was no place for her. Suddenly, as we were about to leave a station, she sprang up and leapt from the train, at which, the unfolded map still in her hand, she gazed bewildered until it vanished into the tunnel.

*(Next month's instalment will contain a number of letters from famous literary men, including several unpublished ones from Robert Louis Stevenson—also Sir Rider Haggard's account of the writing of "She," by many regarded as his most famous book.)*

# The Season-Ticket

By

## B. MACDONALD HASTINGS

*ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN SUTCLIFFE*

"DIVIDE the total by four" was the cue. Simon Tristram had just said that when his head met Hopper's, forehead to forehead, and both were rendered unconscious.

When Simon came to, his first thought was: "Why didn't Hopper laugh?"

Simon Tristram, you see, had been telling a funny story in the Pullman car to his old friend, ex-Detective-Sergeant Hopper. It was a "difficult" funny story, and Simon liked to try this sort on Hopper, because that shrewd and extremely suspicious individual had a way of laughing at a point quite different from the real one, and thereby afforded the whimsical Simon entertainment that was dear to his peculiar spirit.

This was a story of how one Scottish landowner bet another that his shepherd would count the other's sheep accurately no matter how fast they were driven through a gate. The feat was duly performed and, in reply to the amazed loser's inquiry for an explanation, the shepherd replied, "I juist count their feet as they go by and divide the total by four."

Simon, in the ordinary way, would have seen a slow smile spread itself over Hopper's face. Then a laugh would have come, and the ex-detective would have said something like: "I don't suppose he ever thought of that," which would have kept Simon entirely happy for the rest of the way to Porthead.

To-day there was no smile, not even on the face of Simon. They crashed together, and both passed for a time into a world of coloured lights and spurting sparks.

Something had happened to the train. The Pullman car was the last compartment, and luckily not derailed. But it was severely jarred and all its four occupants injured. Simon and Hopper, leaning across a table, were close together when the crash came, and so it came about that they collided and stunned each other. Simon always would have it that Hopper used him, Simon, to stun himself with, but Hopper said he was determined to laugh at the story no matter how bad it might be.

The friendship between these two was an odd one. Simon Tristram was an excessively rich young man, squire of a big place in Devonshire and owner of a wonderful flat in Mount Street. By birth and education he was far removed from the class of the ex-detective, able and respected though the latter was. But Simon had been interested in crime from boyhood, had written psychological studies of Dr. Castaing and the Widow Gras, and always sought the society of those whose business it was to lay the enemies of Society by the heels. He was still a boy at Winchester when he had first met Hopper, and the friendship was now one of ten years' standing.

They were journeying together to Porthead that evening in connection with a peculiar case just entrusted to Hopper, who since he left the police had conducted a private inquiry agency. Hopper, as usual when he came across anything odd, told Simon about it, not only because he liked to give Simon the pleasure of the sleuth-work, but because he knew how shrewd and helpful his young friend could be. The railway accident, as may well be imagined, took their minds off the private case at Porthead for quite a little while.

When Hopper recovered consciousness he found himself lying on a grassy bank. Someone stood over him and appeared to be

offering him drink. From not very far away came agonized cries.

"I don't suppose he had the sense to count their heads," observed Hopper.

"Swallow some of this," ordered a voice. Hopper obeyed and, after the brandy had stimulated his heart, struggled to his feet.

"Where's Simon?" No one answered. "My friend? The train. It's an accident?"

"A very bad one. Several killed. You're lucky. Sit down."

"All right, all right. But my friend——"

"If he was in the Pullman he is all right. No one killed in the Pullman."

"Killed! People killed! That can't be. Oh, listen! Oh, my God, listen! Can't I help?"

"You're not fit yet. Sit still. There's a hundred helpers along there. Doctors. Everything. Sit still and cover your ears."

Hopper clutched his aching head. Why wasn't Simon there to tell him about the sheep pouring, pouring, pouring through the gate, all to be killed, butchered? Ah, the screams, the screams of those sheep!

THE two men re-met at last in the parlour of a little inn near the scene of the accident. Simon walked in looking like a man who had run twenty miles through heat. His eyes burned and he seemed to have wasted.

"Thank God, Simon. Where have you been?"

"Lending a hand." Simon sat. "I recovered pretty quickly, I think, after they'd hauled me out. I looked for you. Hopeless in the dark. Then I ran to where they were—where they were calling."

"Your clothes!"

Simon produced a wry smile and looked himself over. His gay, light spring-time suit was smeared with grime and stains of the kind that the young man had last seen in Flanders.

"D'you know anything? Everyone's got a different story. It wasn't a collision?"

"Something had been put on the line. That's certain. Accident? Intentional? Heaven knows. And I guess I'm going to find out."

The inn was full of customers, for the time was between eight-thirty and nine, and with them Simon and Hopper mixed and talked freely. If an obstruction had been placed on the line it had been done by someone in the neighbourhood or specially visiting the neighbourhood. Simon felt that now was the time to keep one's ears alert for a clue, and shook his head at Hopper's suggestion that he should go to bed.

"The engine-driver's killed, and it's only him could say what he struck," came a voice.

"Yes, but before he died he said he struck something, something that shouldn't ha' been there."

"Is his mate dead too?"

"Aye, his mate's dead."

"Reckon it might have been something dropped off a passing train."

"Nothing off a passing train 'ud be big enough to wreck the express."

"You're wrong. Any little thing 'ud wreck the express in the stretch here, because that's just where she's going fastest."

"Ah," said Simon. "Why is she going fastest here?"

"It's the only straight bit this side of Molecomber, and she's got to make up time."

"Everyone knows that about here, eh?"

"Most folks do, I reckon."

No two could agree as to the number of killed. At least five coaches had been smashed up, the train having leapt from the line and collided with a massive stone embankment. She was one of the fastest of the day between London and Porthead, and there must have been a certain number of season-ticket holders on board. Simon tried to get the busy innkeeper to talk to him, eager to know if he had any unaccustomed visitors that day, but the man was either too stupid or too preoccupied to pay attention.

At ten p.m., the inn's closing time, only Simon and Hopper and three other passengers, who had been lucky enough to get beds, were left with the landlord. Simon had succeeded in telephoning to London and could have been fetched by his car, but he had told Hopper that he was determined to be on the scene of the smash at the first gleam of daylight on the morrow.

"I have seen things, Hop, that you have not seen. If there has been foul play, I am going to see that those poor creatures are avenged."

"Well, you know I must go on to Porthead to-morrow, as soon as the line is clear."

"Certainly. You can take my car when it arrives in the morning and pick me up on the way back. This is a much bigger thing than the affair at Porthead."

"Or may be nothing at all. Just a ghastly accident."

"Daylight will show, I'm sure."

The local police called at the inn before Simon and Hopper got to bed, and questioned the landlord. On top of them came a pressman from the nearest market town, eager to get copy that he might telephone to London.

Simon made Hopper introduce himself to the visiting policemen. They were very friendly and sympathetic and promised that both should accompany them to the scene of

the wreck in the morning. They would not commit themselves to any explanation of the affair, but admitted that the engine-driver had made a statement before he died.

Simon offered them drinks and they sat for a little while in his society with Hopper and the three other stranded passengers, but alcohol had no effect upon their tongues. When they went Simon was irritatingly aware that he would have to go to bed with no evidence of any value whatever to turn over in his mind.

"Where were you gentlemen going?" he asked of his shocked companions. All said that they were going to Porthead. "Then my car will take you in to-morrow. This is Mr. Hopper. He'll be glad of your society."

"To be sure I will," added the ex-detective. "We'll be off just as soon as we've had a look at the wreck."

"Thank you very much, I'm sure," said two of the passengers together.

"I don't want to see the wreck no more," shuddered the third, a passenger with fair hair who had been drinking a little too much.

"What coach were you in?"

"Me? Last but one. That's right. Just in front of the Pullman."

"You don't look much damaged."

"I was thrown on somebody else and winded, but I may have something wrong inside."

"And you two gentlemen," asked Simon, "what was your luck?"

The two men to whom Simon turned looked as if they were aged by their experience. Their hair and moustaches seemed to belong to middle-aged men, but their faces looked very old. They might be commercial travellers.

"We were together," began one. "You say, George."

"Me and my friend was near the end of the train, thank God, near the Pullman end. We got knocked out, and I got a bruise down the side here something awful. Like to see it?"

"I've seen enough to-night, thank you."

"Well, what's your idea of how it happened?"

"Well, I've been saying Bolshies to Albert."

"Bolshies or kids, George."

"Yes, Bolshies or kids."

Simon frowned at the stupid couple. "How on earth would it benefit the Bolshies?"

"Well, sort of getting their own back on Society. Know what I mean?"

"But why choose this train? Not likely to be any capitalists on it. Practically all working people. My friend and I were the only two in the Pullman, bar the attendants."

George smirked. "Hope they wasn't after you, sir."

"Nonsense. No human being knew I was travelling on this train till twenty minutes before it started. Isn't that right, Hopper?"

"Perfectly true."

"Then what if it was kids?"

"Mischievous boys, you mean. Well, boys have been known to put obstructions on railway lines, but I am very impressed with the nature of the spot chosen in this case. It is a lonely place, and it is a place where this particular train is known to be going at its highest speed. If boys did it they must be very cunning little brutes."

"Well, I give it up. All I can say is that you'd think season-ticket holders was entitled to a little more protection. Me and Albert is season-ticket holders." Albert produced his season-ticket in a little gelatine case. "And there's mine. You can all look at it. A month to go and me nearly killed by the company's negligence."

"Don't see how you can blame the company. Still, we'll know more about it in the morning. I swear I shall, at any rate."

"You going to stop down here, sir?"

"Yes. My friend Hopper will pick me up on his way back from Porthead."

"Bit gloomy for you, isn't it?"

"Of course," observed the one called George, "all the bodies is gone. Bodies, eh? Corpses, season-ticket an' all."

Simon had to go to bed without a theory.

THE sun shone on the following morning, and the police, accompanied by Simon and Hopper, soon knew the story of the wrecking of the previous night's express. A large block of stone had been loosened from the top of the embankment and rolled on to the line. The unfortunate engine-driver had said that he got the impression that the engine had struck stone. The block was now in fragments, but the marks of tools were to be found in the gap from which it had been taken. Here, indeed, was no accident, but murder by fell design.

"How long was there between the passing of our train and the one before it?"

"Three-quarters of an hour, sir."

"Not enough to dig that stone out and get it on the rails."

"Time enough if it had been loosened beforehand. Don't touch those sides, if you please. We don't expect finger-marks, but you can't be sure."

"It's a big job for one man."

"There were two, I should think. And then they'd have to work at it a bit at a time."

"The embankment is in view of the inn. They could only work at night."

"Pretty clear, I should say."

"What does the innkeeper say? He's a surly old rascal. I can't get a word out of him."

"He has been told not to talk."

When Simon's car arrived Hopper sat himself beside the chauffeur and bade the stranded passengers of the night before settle down in the body of the car. The yellow-haired man was profuse in his thanks to Simon when he saw the luxurious vehicle in which he was to make the journey to Porthead.

"You've acted quite the gentleman," he assured his benefactor.

"And George and me is much obliged," said the Albert of the night before. "Trouble brings us together like, don't it?"

"Have they taken away all the bodies?" asked George, staring fearfully away in the direction of the smashed train.

"There is no trace of anything human now."

"Ah! Some of 'em would be quite unrecognizable, eh? What an escape! Nice thing for season-ticket holders."

Simon made a disgusted face at Hopper and waved the car on its journey.

"To-morrow morning early, Hopper."

"Not later than ten, Simon. Bye-bye."

WHEN Simon got back to the inn he told the innkeeper of the discovery of the cause of the accident. That worthy merely scowled, and Simon went to his room. Here he got some paper from his bag and, as was his wont when puzzled, put down his speculations in writing.

"Train deliberately wrecked. What train? Train bearing celebrities or very rich men? No. The train carried not more than fifty, say, besides attendants, and these were almost certainly obscure people. Was train wrecked in mistake for another? Hardly likely, as three-quarters of an hour divided it from the preceding train. Then wreckers wished to kill one or more on this very train. Why? The engine-driver might have an enemy. The guard might have an enemy. Their private lives should be looked into. But this a very unlikely line of search. What murderers would not first try one of the many methods of getting rid of an individual as opposed to a group? Who were on the train? That could be ascertained from the list of killed and injured. All those in the first few coaches would be in that list. There seems to have been only one passenger in the first-class coach, which was in the middle, and he was killed. Then came two coaches of third-class people who escaped and could be found by advertisement if necessary. Last was the Pullman, and in that, besides Hopper and self, no one but cook and attendant. What I have to find out is the name or names of people on that train whose death was desired by men willing to take so desperate a course as not only to destroy them but a large number of unconcerned people as well. Simon, this is a snorter."

Simon went for a walk in the spring sunshine. Soon he found himself in the society of policemen and pressmen who were only too obviously thinking on Simon's lines. They were, in fact, scrutinizing most carefully every inch of the land behind that accursed embankment.

No road approached the embankment closely. If the villains had arrived by car they would have had to conceal their machine quite a mile away. "No reason why they should not," thought Simon. But before going farther afield, he climbed up on the broken embankment and looked across the railway line. Here was a very suggestive scene.

A fairly thick wood nestled close up to the line on the other side, and in that Simon saw that car and men could easily hide.

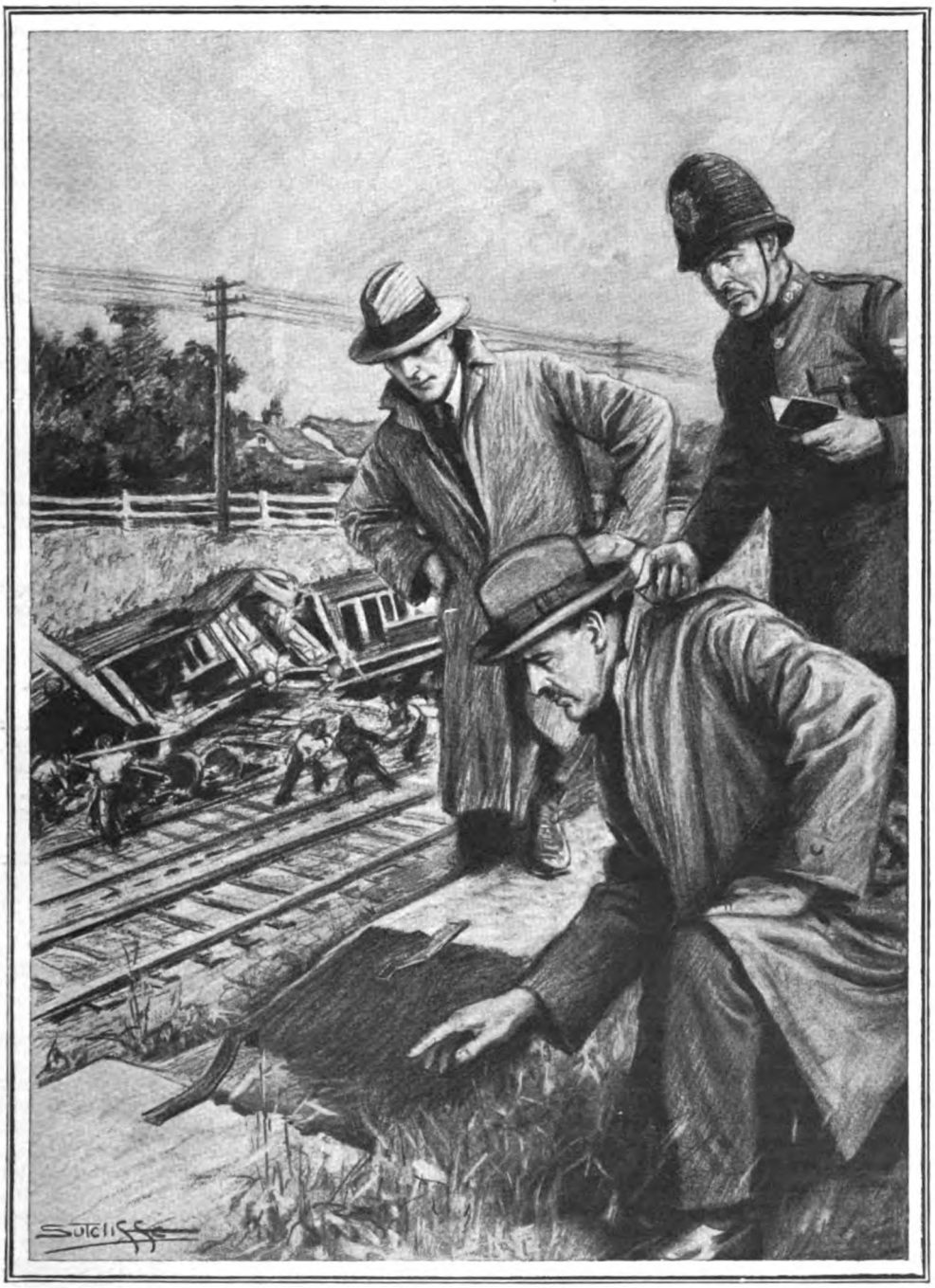
"I wouldn't mind wagering that the villains of the piece were in there last night," reflected Simon.

He crossed the line and prowled along the edge of the wood, looking closely for a footmark or a broken twig. Nothing suggestive came under his eyes. He then proceeded to skirt the wood, looking either for a path or, at any rate, a gap between trees wide enough to admit a car. No such opening presented itself till he had reached the edge of the wood farthest from the railway line. Here, indeed, there was a track wide enough to admit a small car, but the nearest gap in the road was some three hundred yards away, and a field would have to be crossed. This was, of course, possible, and there were wheel-tracks, but to Simon's trained eye they were old, and not those of rubber tyres.

Simon rang the bell at a farmhouse close to that point in the road whence a car must debouch if it were to be steered into the wood.

The farmer was from home, and his wife could only say that cars passed along that road every night. She had not heard the sound of a car starting up the night before. She remembered, in fact, nothing but the great crash of the train and the screaming, and she wished to go where she would never see a railway line again.

Simon now returned to the wood and entered it by the only track which was wide enough to admit a car. There was plenty of leaf on the trees and he found



"Don't touch those sides, if you please. We don't expect finger-marks, but you can't be sure."

himself sometimes in comparative darkness. But as long as there was a track he kept on.

At length he reached a thickness of the wood through which the smallest car could not pass. Here he hesitated and examined the ground closely. Seeing that there was

still a track and still evidence that it had been used at not too remote a date, he decided to penetrate yet a little farther. He had his reward. Deep in the heart of the wood, leaning up against trees, without any attempt at concealment having been made, were two bicycles.

" Police bikes," thought Simon. " They're in here before me." He halloed, but got no answering call.

Simon now examined the bicycles. Their condition was such as to suggest that they had not been there long. Indeed, the light marks that the wheels had made in the soft earth suggested that they had been put there not longer than the night before.

Simon now looked eagerly round for marks of the bicycles having been ridden or wheeled along the track. There were none. Obviously the machines had been carried into the wood. Now who would carry a bicycle into a wood along a track quite suitable for riding or wheeling? Obviously only a man who wished to leave no traces. Simon's body was suffused with the thrill of discovery.

But there the bicycles were. And it was quite obvious that the men who left them where they could so easily be found did not regard them as worth the trouble of hiding. They did not, of course (reasoned Simon), wish them to be found, and so carried them deep into the wood. But if they were found their owners must have reckoned that they would be of no value as clues. Why should they think that? Stolen, of course. But wait till the police got hold of them. They would not rest till they had found out the origin and birthplace of every fraction of either machine. And how much farther would that get them?

On his way out of the wood Simon met policemen entering, and he told them of the bicycles.

" You don't say! But if they're the wreckers' bikes, why are they there still? "

" Perhaps because the wreckers have not gone away yet."

" Surely they wouldn't risk hanging about here? "

" It all depends who they are."

" But if they're local people they wouldn't come here on bikes."

" If they're local people they might steal bikes from a distant town and put them in the wood here to throw you off the scent."

Simon's guess was right up to a point. The police soon discovered that the two bicycles were stolen from the town of Charminster, twelve miles away, on the preceding afternoon, from outside the public library. Needless to say, no one had seen the machines ridden away.

Simon spent the afternoon at the hospital to which the injured had been conveyed By dint of a gift to the hospital funds and an explanation that he was one of the passengers on the wrecked train, he was allowed to chat with all who were well enough to listen to him. Then he visited the mortuary where the dead were laid out, and by spending a little silver was enabled to examine the lists of the articles found on the victims. He left the place looking very disgruntled.

THE following morning saw Hopper back from Porthead, very jubilant over discoveries he had made down there for a client who was an ungrudging payer.

" Bother your potty little affair," said Simon. " Ask me to tell you all about the greatest mystery of the century."

" Of course I want to hear all about it. Are you staying on here? "

" I am not. The criminals are as likely to be in London as anywhere."

" Then we go straight away. Good." Simon's bag was fetched and the car's nose was turned towards London.

" Have a pleasant journey down? "

" How do you mean? Oh, yesterday morning. Yes, quite all right. I suppose you—— "

" Talk to those fellows at all? "

" No. I sat in front, as you know."

" Where did you drop them? "

" One of 'em just outside Porthead and the other two on the sea-front."

" That would be Albert and George."

" I don't know their silly names."

" I ought to have taken their addresses."

" Fat lot of good they'll be to you."

Simon then told Hopper about the bicycles, and the ex-detective whistled.

" That's a stage farther. I'm hanged if it isn't."

" What do they mean? "

" Either false scent stuff, which generally defeats itself, or they lost their nerve."

" Suppose they lost their lives? "

" They'll lose 'em all right if they're caught."

" Listen, Hopper. Those men almost certainly stayed to see what would happen. Suppose they were foolish enough to stand in an exposed position. People cannot choose wisely in the dark. There was a lot of dangerous stuff flying about from the smashed engine, and they may have encountered some of it."

" Killed or injured, eh? By Jove, Simon, then we've got 'em."

" How? "

" We must find out if any of the killed or injured in hospital are without railway tickets."

" Bright boy. All that has been done."

" Oh, has it? And what result? "

He decided to penetrate yet a little farther. He had his reward. Deep in the heart of the wood, leaning up against trees, were two bicycles.

"All had tickets save two dead women, and they probably had theirs in bags which were burnt."

"Yes. And this is no woman's job."

"Of course not. No two women I have ever seen could have moved that block of stone."

"Then if the criminals were not killed or

injured, and those bicycles are not false scent stuff, the police ought to have an easy job."

"Why?"

"Men who didn't bike or motor away must have walked away. Someone sure to have seen them. I'd start searching all the woods down there."

"This crime was not committed by anyone so devoid of cunning as to hide in woods. The criminals are at this moment, I am sure, situated beyond the reach of a suspicion."

"But they were not last night."

"A shrewd comment, Hopper, and therein lies our only hope. They were situated at the time of the wrecking where suspicion would certainly fall on them, unless they were on the train."

"Unless — they were — on — the train! Simon, that's impossible."

"Utterly impossible, of course. But oh, Hopper, my Hopper, what a beautiful alibi!"

THE Board of Trade inquiry and the most thorough investigations of the police revealed nothing, and the public began to think that the stone had been jarred out by passing trains and finally fell on to the line. Simon had anticipated this and had not ceased to work on his own account. With the aid of Hopper he devoted himself to studying the private lives not only of the dead and injured, but also of the uninjured who replied to his advertisement. He knew that there lived one or more persons who had plotted the death of one or more persons on that train, and when he had their motive the odds were that he had their identity.

The work was very unpleasant. Relatives were often indignant, and Hopper greatly disliked his share of the inquiry. But Simon was the idol of his heart, and Simon paid very liberally. Case after case of dead or living passenger was investigated, but without any suggestive discovery. One of the killed was a moneylender, but it was soon found that no client of his could have known that he was going to Porthead, let alone by that particular train. Another was a miserly old man whose relatives might have wished him dead, but it had been notorious for some time that his will left everything to charities.

Simon one day announced to Hopper that he had come to the conclusion that the unlucky creature who had brought disaster on the train was a season-ticket holder.

"He must have been in the regular habit of travelling by that route or the criminals would not take the preliminary steps of loosening the block of stone. They were probably told by telephone that he was on the train, as they would hardly be so reckless as just to rely on his custom. There was a confederate in London in that case. I wonder if the railway people would let me study their season-ticket list?"

The railway people gladly gave Simon a free hand when he explained who he was and something of his theory, and Simon spent many hours of quiet contemplation in the society of letters written from Porthead and neighbourhood by applicants for season-tickets in the year or so before the smash. He found a certain item of absorbing interest and was so content with his discovery that he advised Hopper, greatly to that worthy's relief, that he need not worry any other relatives of the dead for details of possible feuds or vendettas.

"In fact, Hopper, I have already told the police enough to justify them in making immediate arrests. They are very grateful, but are, as usual, proceeding very warily. They won't swoop, as you know, till they're sure of being able to prove their case."

A WEEK later two men were arrested for the ghastly crime of train-wrecking, and Simon celebrated the occasion by asking Hopper to dinner in his Mount Street flat.

"The great mistake we made, Hop, old boy, was in concentrating first of all on the well-to-do victims. We thought that for a big crime there must be a big motive. That does not always follow."

"We were right to try the most likely persons first."

"Certainly. But wrong not to persevere till we knew everything about the humblest victims. I am rather ashamed that I was led to the truth by that season-ticket correspondence."

"Hurry up, Simon. You do love to tantalize me."

"I am being exceedingly brief. On that season-ticket list I find the names of Walsh and Hopkins. That mean anything to you?"

"Walsh? Wasn't there a Walsh among the killed?"

"There were both a Walsh and a Hopkins among the killed."

"And they were season-ticket holders. What of that?"

"The Walsh and Hopkins that were killed were not season-ticket holders. The Walsh and Hopkins that were season-ticket holders are still alive."

"Common names."

"Yes. But the Walsh that is a season-ticket holder is called Albert Walsh and the Hopkins that is a season-ticket holder is called George Hopkins."

"Simon! Simon! Simon!"

**Simon found a certain item of absorbing interest.**

" Hop, you clod, do you mean to say you have forgotten George and Albert ? "

" The world's full of Georges and Alberts."

" Have you forgotten the George and Albert whom you motored to Porthead on the morning after the smash ? "

" By Jove, yes ! With a nasty fair-haired young man. Well, were they the George Hopkins and Albert Walsh on the season-ticket list ?"

" They were."

" Well, what does that reveal ? "

" Wait. Isn't it an odd thing that a Walsh and a Hopkins should be killed in a front coach and a Walsh and a Hopkins saved from a back coach ? "

" It's odd, but that sort of coincidence is quite common."

" I paid a visit to Porthead and found a public-house near the addresses of George and Albert. They were well-known there. When I left the public-house I went straight to the police-station, and as a result George and Albert will very shortly swing."

" But why, why, why ? They were on the train with us, weren't they ? "

" They made us think so, the clever brutes. Now I'll tell you how they proceeded. First of all, as regular season-ticket holders, they knew at what point the train travelled fastest. Next they knew of the existence of the embankment at a suitable spot because they saw it frequently from the train. They conceived the idea of loosening one of the stone blocks and placing it on the line. Whether they paid more than one night visit, and when they paid them, and whether they rode to the

spot on their own bicycles, I don't know, but they must have loosened the stone in such a way that it did not look as if it had been disturbed. They were then ready for their victims."

"But who were they after?"

"All in good time. On the day of the crime they are aware that their victims will be on the train which you and I travelled by. They took train from London to Charminster, meaning to walk from there and hide if they saw anyone. But two bicycles were practically offered to them by two stupid youths, and they were quick to see their value as false clues. They rode in the dusk to the wood opposite the railway embankment. In the wood they waited in darkness till perhaps a quarter of an hour before the train was due. Then they crossed the line, dragged down the big stone, and placed it across the rails. Where they were at the exact moment of the smash I don't know, but later it was easy for them to mix with the survivors in the dark, and they took care to go to the inn so that they should be seen in their assumed parts of scarified survivors."

"Clever, of course, but I can't but think it risky. In the dark they could have cycled away quite easily."

"And then would have had no sort of alibi."

"I can't understand the eagerness for the alibi. Criminals only think of that when they know they are bound to be suspected."

"Exactly. Walsh and Hopkins knew they'd be suspected."

"Why?"

"Well, for one thing, their landladies could testify that they were away from home that night."

"So must have been a great many other people."

"And, for another thing, Mrs. Walsh and Mrs Hopkins were killed on the front coach."

"Their wives!"

"Yes, Hopper."

"How utterly ghastly!"

"Those two poor women went together to town for a day two or three times a year. Doubtless they travelled up with their husbands on the morning of the fatal day, and doubtless the husbands looked out of the window with a certain interested curiosity as the train passed the loosened stone of the embankment."

"Don't, Simon."

"As for the evening, their husbands would doubtless choose the train for them. It needed only a little emphasizing. 'Be sure you're on that train and we'll go down with you. Get in one of the front carriages, near the engine, and then we'll find you easily.' I think I can hear them talk, Hopper. Of course, their story now is that they thought their wives were on an earlier train and had no idea of their death till they got home."

"It's a plausible story. How on earth can you disprove it?"

"It so happens that one of these two scoundrels was suspected of travelling with an expired 'season,' and on that very day he was watched. He slipped through on arrival from Porthead in the morning, but when he came into the station with his friend in the afternoon he was shadowed. Of course, when he and his friend bought two single tickets for Charminster——"

"Ah! Got 'em!"

"—— he could not be challenged, but the railway detective's pencilled report of that purchase is in the season-ticket office."

"Yes, yes. Murderers always catch themselves. But what on earth, Simon, are these vile men?"

"Rank specimens of the worst in humanity. Both have been running shady businesses all their lives and have been very unprosperous lately. Selling their wives' jewellery in public-houses, thoroughly up against it."

"But how did they expect to profit?"

"That I found out from the landlord of their home public-house. The police were just in time to upset the presentation of cheques for three thousand pounds each to the bereaved husbands by a representative of *The Daily Mercury*. 'Fill up the form on page 5 at once.' You know the sort of thing."

"Simon, for the love of Mike, tell me one of your funny stories."

"Certainly, Hop. There was once a shepherd who was celebrated for his phenomenal gift for counting sheep. One day his master made a bet with——"

# THE LEVEL BUSINESS HEAD

*By*

## P. G. WODEHOUSE

*ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER*

ANOTHER beaker of port, laddie?" urged Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, hospitably.

"Thanks."

"One more stoup of port for Mr. Corcoran, Baxter. You may bring the coffee, cigars, and liqueurs to us in the library in about a quarter of an hour."

The butler filled my glass and melted away. I looked about me dizzily. We were seated in the spacious dining-room of Ukridge's Aunt Julia's house on Wimbledon Common. A magnificent banquet had wound its way to a fitting finish, and the whole thing seemed to me inexplicable.

"I don't understand this," I said. "How do I come to be sitting here, bursting with rich food paid for by your aunt?"

"Perfectly simple, laddie. I expressed a desire for your company to-night, and she at once consented."

"But why? She has never let you invite me here before. She can't stand me."

Ukridge sipped his port.

"Well, the fact of the matter is, Corky," he said, in a burst of confidence, "things have been occurring recently in the home which have resulted in what you might call the dawning of a new life as far as Aunt Julia and I are concerned. It is not too much to say that she now eats out of my hand and is less than the dust beneath my chariot wheels. I will tell you the story, for it will be of help to you in your journey through the world. It is a story which shows that, be the skies never so black, nothing can harm a man provided that he has a level business head. Tempests may lour——"

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"Get on with it. How did all this happen?"

Ukridge mused for awhile.

"I suppose the thing really started," he said, "when I pawned her brooch——"

"You pawned your aunt's brooch?"

"Yes."

"And that endeared you to her?"

"I will explain all that later. Meanwhile, let me begin at the beginning. Have you ever run across a man named Joe the Lawyer?"

"No."

"Stout fellow with a face like a haggis."

"I've never met him."

"Endeavour not to do so, Corky. I hate to speak ill of my fellow-man, but Joe the Lawyer is not honest."

"What does he do? Pawn people's brooches?"

Ukridge adjusted the ginger-beer wire that held his pince-nez to his flapping ears, and looked wounded.

"This is scarcely the tone I like to hear in an old friend, Corky. When I reach that point in my story, you will see that my pawning of Aunt Julia's brooch was a perfectly normal, straightforward matter of business. How else could I have bought half the dog?"

"Half what dog?"

"Didn't I tell you about the dog?"

"No."

"I must have done. It's the nub of the whole affair."

"Well, you didn't."

"I'm getting this story all wrong," said Ukridge. "I'm confusing you. Let me begin right at the beginning."

THIS bloke, Joe the Lawyer (said Ukridge), is a bookmaker with whom I have had transactions from time to time, but until the afternoon when this story starts we had never become in any way intimate. Occasionally I would win a couple of quid off him and he would send me a cheque, or he would win a couple of quid off me and I would go round to his office to ask him to wait till Wednesday week; but we had never mingled socially, as you might say, until this afternoon I'm speaking of, when I happened to look in at the Bedford Street Bodega and found him there, and he asked me to have a glass of the old tawny.

Well, laddie, you know as well as I do that there are moments when a glass of the old tawny makes all the difference; so I assented with a good deal of heartiness.

"Fine day," I said.

"Yes," said this bloke. "Do you want to make a large fortune?"

"Yes."

"Then listen," said this bloke. "You know the Waterloo Cup. Listen. I've taken over as a bad debt from a client the dog that's going to win the Waterloo Cup. This dog has been kept dark, but you can take it from me it's going to win the Waterloo Cup. And then what? Well, then it's going to fetch something. It's going to be valuable. It's going to have a price. It's going to be worth money. Listen. How would you like to buy a half-share in that dog?"

"Very much."

"Then it's yours."

"But I haven't any money."

"You mean to say you can't raise fifty quid?"

"I can't raise five."

"Gawblimey!" said the bloke.

And, looking at me in a despairing sort of way, like a father whose favourite son has hurt his finest feelings, he finished his old tawny and pushed out into Bedford Street. And I went home.

Well, as you may imagine, I brooded not a little on my way back to Wimbledon. The one thing nobody can say of me, Corky, is that I lack the spacious outlook that wins to wealth. I know a good thing when I see one. This was a good thing, and I recognized it as such. But how to acquire the necessary capital was the point. Always my stumbling-block, that has been. I wish I had a shilling for every time I've failed to become a millionaire through lack of the necessary capital.

What sources of revenue had I, I asked myself. George Tupper, if tactfully approached, is generally good for a fiver; and you, no doubt, had it been a matter of a few shillings or half a sovereign, would gladly have leaped into the breach. But fifty quid! A large sum, laddie. It wanted thinking over, and I devoted the whole force of my intelligence to the problem.

Oddly enough, the one source of supply that had never presented itself to me was my Aunt Julia. As you know, she has warped and peculiar ideas about money. For some reason or other she will never give me a cent. And yet it was my Aunt Julia who solved my problem. There is a destiny in these matters, Corky, a sort of fate.

When I got back to Wimbledon, I found her looking after her packing; for she was off next morning on one of those lecture tours she goes in for.

"Stanley," she said to me, "I nearly forgot. I want you to look in at Murgatroyd's, in Bond Street, to-morrow and get my diamond brooch. They are re-setting it. Bring it back and put it in my bureau drawer. Here is the key. Lock the drawer and send the key to me by registered post."

And so, you see, everything was most satisfactorily settled. Long before my aunt came back the Waterloo Cup would be run for, and I should have acquired vast affluence. All I had to do was to have a duplicate key made, so that I could put the brooch in the drawer when I had redeemed it. I could see no flaw in the scheme of things. I saw her off at Euston, sauntered round to Murgatroyd's, collected the brooch, sauntered off to the pawnbroker's, put the brooch up the spout, and walked out, for the first time in many weeks in a sound financial position. I rang up Joe the Lawyer on the 'phone, closed the deal about the dog, and there I was, with my foot on the ladder of Fortune.

BUT in this world, Corky, you never know. That is the thing I always try to impress on every young fellow starting out in life—that you never know. It was about two days later that the butler came to me in the garden and said a gentleman wished to speak to me on the 'phone.

I shall always remember that moment. It was a lovely, still evening, and I was sitting in the garden under a leafy tree, thinking beautiful thoughts. The sun was setting in a blaze of gold and crimson; the little birds were chirping their heads off; and I was half-way through the whisky-and-soda of a lifetime. I recollect that, an instant before Baxter came out to fetch me, I had just been thinking how peaceful and wonderful and perfect the world was.

I went to the 'phone.

"Hullo!" said a voice.

It was Joe the Lawyer. And Baxter had said it was a gentleman.

"Are you there?" said this bloke Joe.

"Yes."

"Listen."

"What?"

"Listen. You know that dog I said was going to win the Waterloo Cup?"

"Yes."

"Well, he isn't."

"Why not?"

"Because he's dead."

I don't mind telling you, Corky, that I reeled. Yes, your old friend reeled.

"Dead!"

"Dead."

"You don't mean dead?"

"Yes."

"Then what about my fifty pounds?"

"I keep that."

"What!"

"Of course I keep it. Once a sale's gone through, it's gone through. I know my law. That's why the boys call me Joe the Lawyer. But I'll tell you what I'll do. You send me a letter, releasing all rights in that dog, and I'll give you a fiver. I'll be robbing myself, but I'm like that. Big-hearted old Joe, I am, and that's all there is about it."

"What did the dog die of?"

"Pewmonia."

"I don't believe he's dead at all."

"You don't believe my word?"

"No."

"Well, you come round to my stable and see for yourself."

So I went round and viewed the remains. There was no doubt about it, the dog had handed in his dinner-pail. So I wrote the letter, got my fiver, and came back to Wimbledon to try and rebuild my shattered life. Because you can readily see, Corky, that I was up against it in no uncertain manner. Aunt Julia would be back before long, and would want to see her brooch; and though I'm her own flesh and blood, and I shouldn't be surprised if she had dandled me on her knee when I was a child, I couldn't picture her bearing with anything like Christian fortitude the news that I had pawned it in order to buy a half-share in a dead dog.

And the very next morning in blew Miss Angelica Vining, the poetess.

She was a gaunt sort of toothy female who had come to lunch once or twice while I had been staying in my aunt's house. A great pal of my aunt's.

"Good morning," said this disease, beaming. "What a heavenly day! One could almost fancy oneself out in the country, couldn't one? Even at so short a distance from the heart of the City one seems to sense in the air a freshness which one cannot get in London, can one? I've come for your aunt's brooch."

I braced myself up with a hand on the piano.

"You've what?" I said.

"To-night is the dance of the Pen and Ink Club, and I wired to your aunt to ask if I might borrow her brooch, and she has written to say that I may. It's in her bureau."

"Which is, most unfortunately, locked."

"Your aunt sent me the key. I have it in my bag."

She opened her bag, Corky, and at this moment my guardian angel, who had been lying down on his job pretty considerably for the last week or so, showed a sudden flash of speed. The door was open, and through it at this juncture there trickled one of my aunt's Pekes. You will recollect my aunt's Pekes. I pinched them once, to start a Dog College.

This animal gazed at the female, and the female went off like a soda-water bottle.

"Oh, the sweet thing!" she bubbled.

She put the bag down and swooped on the dog. He tried to side-step, but she had him.

" Oh, the tweetums ! " she cried.

And, her back being turned, Corky, I nipped to the bag, found the key, trousered it, and back to position one.

Presently she came to the surface again.

" Now I really must hurry away," she said. " I will just get the brooch and scurry." She fumbled in her bag. " Oh, dear ! I've lost the key."

" Too bad," I said. " Still," I went on, thinking it might be all for the best, " what does a girl need jewellery for ? The greatest jewel a girl can possess is her youth, her beauty."

It went well, but not quite well enough.

" No," she said, " I must have the brooch. I've set my heart on it. We must break the lock."

" I couldn't dream of such a thing," I said firmly. " I am in a position of trust. I cannot break up my aunt's furniture."

" Oh, but——"

" No."

Well, laddie, there ensued a pretty painful scene. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and not many like a woman who wants a brooch and isn't allowed to get it. The atmosphere, when we parted, was full of strain.

" I shall write to Miss Ukridge and tell her exactly what has happened," said the poetess, pausing at the front door.

She then shoved off, leaving me limp and agitated. These things take it out of a fellow.

Something, I perceived, had got to be done, and done swiftly. From some source I had to raise fifty quid. But where could I turn ? My credit, Corky—and I tell you this frankly, as an old friend—is not good. No, it is not good. In all the world there seemed to be but one man who might be induced to let me have fifty quid at a pinch, and that was Joe the Lawyer. I don't say I was relying on him, mind you. But the broad, fundamental thing, when you're trying to borrow fifty quid, is to begin by fixing on someone who has got fifty quid. I knew that Joe had it, because I had given it to him. And it seemed to me that, if there was a spark of human feeling in his bosom, he might, after a good deal of eloquence, be persuaded to help an old business colleague out of a very tight place.

At any rate, he was the only relief in sight, so I rang up his office ; and, finding that he would be at the Lewes Races next day, I took an early train there.

WELL, Corky, I might have known. It stands to reason that, if a man has a spark of human feeling in his bosom, he does not become a bookie. I stood beside this bloke, Joe the Lawyer, from the start of the two o'clock race to the finish of the four-thirty, watching him rake in huge sums from mugs of every description until his satchel was simply bursting with cash ; but when I asked him for the loan of a measly fifty pounds he didn't even begin to look like parting.

You cannot fathom the psychology of these blighters, Corky. If you will believe me, the chief reason why he would not lend me this paltry sum appeared to be a fear of what people would say if they heard about it.

" Lend you fifty quid ? " he said, in a sort of stunned way. " Who, me ? Silly I'd look, wouldn't I, lending you fifty quid ! "

" But you don't mind looking silly."

" Having all the boys saying I was a soft-hearted fool."

" A man of your stamp doesn't care what fellows like that say," I urged. " You're too big. You can afford to despise them."

" Well, I can't afford to lend any fifty quids. I'd never hear the last of it."

I simply can't understand this terror of public opinion. Morbid, I call it. I told him I would keep the thing a dead secret —and, if he thought it safer, not even give him a line in writing to acknowledge the debt ; but no, there was no tempting him.

" I'll tell you what I will do," he said.

" Twenty quid ? "

" No, not twenty quid. Nor ten quid, either. Nor five quid. Nor one quid. But I'll give you a lift back as far as Sandown in my car to-morrow, that's what I'll do."

From the way he spoke, you would have thought he was doing me the best turn one man had ever done another. I was strongly inclined to reject his offer with contempt. The only thing that decided me to accept was the thought that, if he had as good a day at Sandown as he had had at Lewes, his better nature might after all assert itself even at the eleventh hour. I mean to say, even a bookie must have a melting mood occasionally ; and if one came to Joe the Lawyer, I wanted to be on the spot.

" Start from here at eleven sharp. If you aren't ready, I'll go without you."

This conversation, Corky, had taken place in the saloon bar of the Coach and Horses at Lewes ; and, having said these few words, the bloke Joe popped off. I stayed on to have one more, feeling the need of it after the breakdown of the business negotiations ; and the fellow behind the bar got chatty.

" That was Joe the Lawyer just went out, wasn't it ? " he said. He chuckled. " He's wide, that man is."

I wasn't much in the mood to pass the time discussing a fellow who wouldn't let an

old business friend have an insignificant sum like fifty quid, so I just nodded.

"Heard the latest about him?"

"No."

"He's wide, Joe is. He had a dog that was entered for the Waterloo Cup, and it died."

"I know."

"Well, I bet you don't know what he did. Some of the lads were in here just now, talking about it. He raffled that dog."

"How do you mean, raffled it?"

"Put it up for a raffle at twenty pounds a ticket."

"But it was dead."

"Certainly it was dead. But he didn't tell them that. That's where he was wide."

"But how could he raffle a dead dog?"

"Why couldn't he raffle a dead dog? Nobody knew it was dead."

"How about the man who drew the winning ticket?"

"Ah! Well, he had to tell him, of course. He just handed him his money back. And there he was, a couple of hundred quid in hand. He's wide, Joe is."

Have you ever experienced, Corky, that horrible sensation of having all your ideals totter and melt away, leaving you in a world of hideous blackness where it seems impossible to trust your fellow-man an inch? What do you mean, my aunt must often have felt that way? I resent these slurs, **Corky.** Whenever I have had occasion to pinch anything from my aunt, it has always been with the most scrupulous motives, with the object of collecting a little ready cash in order to lay the foundations of a vast fortune.

"Oh, the tweetums!" she cried. And, her back being turned, I nipped to the bag, found the key, **and trousered it.**

This was an entirely different matter. This fiend in human shape had had no thought but of self. Not content with getting fifty quid out of me and sticking to it like glue, he had deliberately tricked me into accepting five pounds for all rights in a dead dog which he knew was shortly about to bring him in a couple of hundred. Was it fair? Was it just?

And the terrible part of the whole thing was that there seemed nothing that I could do about it. I couldn't even reproach him. At least, I could—but a fat lot of help that would have been. All I could do was to save

my train-fare home by accepting a lift in his car.

I am bound to say, Corky—and this will show you how a man's moral outlook may deteriorate through contact with fellows of this stamp—I am bound to say that there were moments during the night when I toyed with the thought of taking a dip into that satchel of his, should the opportunity occur during the journey. But I dismissed the plan as unworthy of me. Whatever the injuries I had sustained, my hands at least, please Heaven, should be clean. Besides, it seemed very improbable that an opportunity would occur.

And, sure enough, I noticed next morning, when we started out, that he kept the satchel wedged in between him and the side of the car, entirely out of my reach. He was that sort of man.

HOW strange it is, Corky, that in this world we seem fated never to be able to enjoy life to the full! No doubt it is all for a purpose, and is intended to make us more spiritual and fit us for the life to come; but it is a nuisance. Take my case. I am particularly fond of motoring; and circumstances have so ordered themselves that it is only occasionally that I am able to get a ride. And here I was, bowling along the high road on an ideal motoring day, totally unable to enjoy the experience.

For there are certain conditions, laddie, under which the heart cannot rejoice. How could I revel in the present when the past was an agony to contemplate and the future as black as ink? Every time I tried not to let my mind dwell on the way this man beside me had done me down, it skidded off into the future and dwelt on the interview which must so soon take place between me and my aunt. So the fact that it was a lovely day and that I was getting a ride for nothing practically escaped me.

We buzzed on through the pleasant countryside. The sun shone in the sky: birds tootled in the hedgerows: the engine of the two-seater hummed smoothly.

And then, fairly suddenly, I became aware that the engine was not humming so smoothly. It had begun to knock. And then there was a sizzling noise, and steam began to creep out of the top of the radiator-cap.

Joe made one or two remarks concerning the man at the hotel who had forgotten to put water in the radiator.

"You can get some at that cottage," I said.

There was a cottage down the road, standing by itself in a lot of trees. Joe pulled up the car and got down.

"I'll stay here and look after your satchel," I said. There was no sense in not being civil and obliging.

"No, you won't. I'll take it with me."

"It will hamper you if you're going to carry a pail of water."

"I'd look silly leaving my satchel with you, wouldn't I?"

I don't know which distressed me the more, his sickening want of ordinary trust or his absurd respect for appearances. The man seemed to go through the world in a restless fear lest some action of his might make him look silly.

And he couldn't possibly have looked sillier than he did about two minutes later.

This cottage, Corky, was separated from the road by iron railings with a gate in them. The bloke Joe shoved this gate open and went into the front garden. And he was just starting to move round in the direction of the back door when round the corner of the house there suddenly came trotting a dog.

Joe stopped, and the dog stopped. They stood there for a moment, drinking each other in.

"Ger-r-r!" said Joe.

Now, mind you, there was absolutely nothing about this dog to inspire alarm. Certainly it was on the large side and had rather a rolling eye; but I could see at a glance that it was just one of those friendly mongrels which your man of the world greets with a cheerful chirrup and prods in the ribs without a second thought. But Joe seemed ill at ease.

The dog came a step closer. I think he wanted to smell Joe, though I could have told him, as a friend, that there was neither profit nor pleasure to be derived from such a course.

"Gerroutofit!" said Joe.

The dog edged forward. Then, in a tentative sort of way, he barked. And Joe seemed to lose his head completely. Instead of trying to conciliate the animal, he picked up a stone and threw it.

Well, you simply can't do that sort of thing to a dog you don't know in his own garden.

It was the satchel that saved Joe. It shows the lengths to which fear will drive a man, Corky; and if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes I wouldn't have believed it. But it's the truth that, as that dog came leaping up in a businesslike way that it did me good to watch, Joe the Lawyer, having given one look over his shoulder at the gate and decided that he couldn't make it, uttered a piercing cry and flung considerably over two hundred quid in bank-notes at the animal. The satchel took him low down on the chest, got entangled in his legs, and held him up. And while he was trying to unscramble himself,

Joe nipped to the gate and slammed it behind him.

It was only then that he seemed to realize what a perfect chump he had made of himself.

"Gawblimey!" said Joe.

The dog left the satchel and came to the gate. He shoved his nose as far through the bars as he could manage, and made a noise like a saxophone.

"Now you've done it," I said.

AND so he had, and I was glad, Corky. It pleased me sincerely to find a man who prided himself on his acumen capable of such perfectly cloth-headed behaviour. Here was this blighter, admired by all—provided they didn't have business dealings with him—for his wideness, breaking down lamentably in the first crisis where he was called upon to show a little ordinary intelligence. He had allowed himself to be out-generalled by a humble unit of the animal kingdom, and I had no sympathy for him.

However, I didn't say so. One must be diplomatic. I had not altogether given up hope of floating that loan, and anything in the nature of frivolous comment would, I felt, have the worst effect on the negotiations.

"What'll I do?" said Joe, after a few general remarks.

"Better shout," I suggested.

So he shouted. But nothing happened. The fact is, these bookies are never in very good voice after a day at the races, and he was handicapped by a certain roopiness. Besides, the owner of the cottage was evidently one of those blokes who plough the fields and scatter the good seed o'er the land, and he seemed to be out somewhere ploughing and scattering now.

Joe began to get emotional.

"Gawblimey!" he said, with tears in his voice. "This is a nice thing! Here I am, late already, and if I don't get to Sandown in time for the first race it's going to mean hundreds of pounds out of my pocket."

You will scarcely credit it, Corky, but this was the first moment that that aspect of the affair had presented itself to me. His words opened up an entirely new train of thought. Naturally, I now perceived, mugs being what they are, every race a bookie misses means so much dead loss to him. Sandown was crowded with potential losers, all waiting to hand their money over to Joe; and, if he was not there, what would happen? They had to give their money to someone, so they would hand it over to one of his trade rivals. I felt as if a sudden bright light had flashed upon me.

"Look here," I said, "if you will lend me fifty quid, I'll go in and get that satchel for you. I'm not afraid of a dog."

He did not answer. He cocked an eye at me; then he cocked an eye at the satchel. I could see he was weighing the proposition. But at this moment the luck went against me. The dog, getting a bit bored, gave a sniff and trotted back round the corner of the house. And no sooner had he disappeared than Joe, feeling that now was the time, popped through the gate and galloped for the satchel.

Well, Corky, you know me. Alert. Resourceful. There was a stick lying in the road, and to leap for it and grab it was with me the work of a moment. I rattled it energetically along the railings. And back came old Colonel Dog as if I had pulled him at the end of a rope. It was an occasion when Joe had to move quick, and he did so. He had perhaps a foot to spare, or it may have been eight inches.

He was a good deal annoyed, and for awhile spoke freely of this and that.

"Fifty quid," I said, when there was a lull.

He looked at me. Then he nodded. I don't say he nodded genially, but he nodded. And I opened the gate and went in.

The dog bounded at me, barking; but I knew that was all swank, and I told him so. I bent down and slapped my tummy, and the dog shoved his paws on my shoulders and licked my face. Then I took his head and waggled it sideways once or twice, and he took my hand in his mouth and gnawed it slightly. Then I rolled him over and began punching his chest; and then, when these civilities were finished, I got up and looked round for the satchel.

It was gone. And there was that blot on the human race, Joe the Lawyer, standing outside, fondling it as if it were a baby. Not that a man like that would fondle a baby, of course. Much more likely to kick it in the face and break open its money-box. But what I mean is, he'd dashed in when my back was turned and collared the satchel.

I had a grim foreboding that our little deal was off, but I displayed a cheerful exterior.

"In large notes," I said.

"Eh?" said the bloke Joe.

"I'd rather have my fifty quid in large notes. They take up less room in the pocket."

"What fifty quid?"

"The fifty quid you were going to give me for getting the satchel."

He gaped.

"Well, I'll be blowed!" he said. "I like that! Who got the satchel, you or me?"

"I soothed the dog."

" If you like to waste your time playing with dogs, that's your business. I'd look silly, wouldn't I, giving you fifty quid for playing with dogs ? But, if you like doing it, you go on playing with him while I step down the road and get some water from one of those other cottages."

Black-hearted. That, Corky, is the only adjective. It seemed to me at that moment as though this bloke Joe had allowed me to peer into his soul ; and it was like looking into a dark cellar on a moonless night.

" Here, I say——" I began, but he had gone.

HOW long I stood there I don't know. But, though it seemed a lifetime, it couldn't really have been long, for Joe didn't come back with the water ; and a faint hope began to steal over me that he had found another dog at one of the other cottages and was now being bitten to the bone. And then I heard footsteps.

I looked round. A cove was approaching.

" Is this your cottage ? " I asked.

He was a rural-looking sort of cove, with a full beard and corduroy trousers with string tied round the knees. He came up and stood gazing at the car. Then he looked at me, and then at the car again.

" Ah ? " he said. A bit deaf he seemed to be.

" Is this your cottage ? "

" Ah."

" We stopped here to get some water."

He said he hadn't got a daughter. I said I never said he had.

" Water ! "

" Ah."

" But there was nobody in. So the man with me went down the road."

" Ah," said the cove.

" He was frightened by your dog."

" Ah ? "

" By your dog."

" Buy my dog ? "

" Yes."

" You can have him for five shillings."

Now, as I said before, Corky, you know me. You know that the reason why one of these days I shall make an enormous fortune and retire to spend the evening of my life in affluence is that I have that strange knack, which is given to so few men, of seizing opportunity when it calls. An ordinary mutton-headed fellow like you—I use the expression without any intention of offence—would undoubtedly at this juncture have raised his voice a trifle and explained to this bearded cove that the intricacies of the English language had led him into a pardonable error.

But did I ? No, I did not. For, even as he spoke, an idea exploded in my brain like a bomb.

" Done ! " I cried.

" Ah ? "

" Here's your five bob. Whistle to the dog."

He whistled, and the dog came running up. And, having massaged his ribs awhile, I picked him up and shoved him inside the car and banged the door. And then I saw Joe the Lawyer plodding up the road, slopping water from a big pail.

" I got it," he said.

He went round and unscrewed the cap of the radiator and was starting to pour the water in, when the dog barked. Joe looked up, saw him, and dropped the pail—happily over his trousers.

" Who put that dog in the car ? " he said.

" I did. I've bought him."

" Then you can damn well take him out."

" But I'm bringing him home with me."

" Not in my car."

" Well, then," I said, " I'll sell him to you, and you can do what you like about him."

He exhibited a good deal of impatience.

" I don't want to buy any dogs."

" Nor did I, till you talked me into it. And I don't see what you have to complain of. This dog's alive. The one you sold me was dead."

" What do you want for him ? "

" A hundred pounds."

He staggered somewhat.

" A hundred pounds ? "

" That's all. Don't let the boys hear of it, or they'll think me silly."

He spoke for awhile.

" A hundred and fifty," I said. " The market's rising."

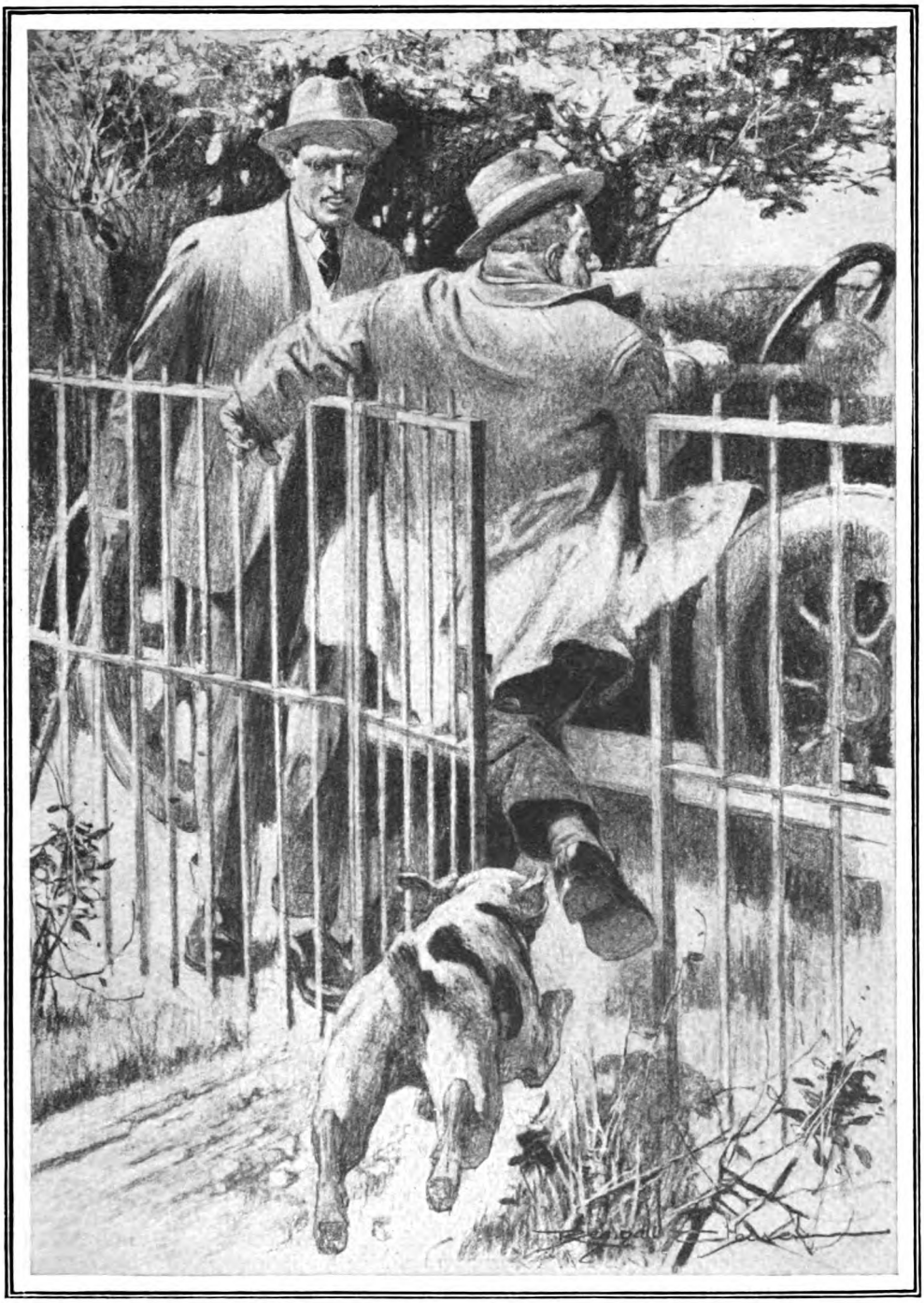
" Now, listen, listen, listen ! " said the bloke Joe.

" I'll tell you what I'll do," I said. "And this is a firm offer. One hundred pounds, if paid within the minute. After that the price will go up."

Corky, old horse, I have in my time extracted various sums of money from various people, and some of them have given cheerfully of their abundance and others have unbelted in a manner that you might call wry. But never in the whole of my career have I beheld a fellow-human being cough up in quite the spirit that this bloke Joe the Lawyer did. He was a short-necked man, and there was one moment when I thought his blood-pressure was going to be too much for him. He turned a rather vivid shade of maroon, and his lips trembled as if he were praying. But in the end he dipped into the satchel and counted out the money.

" Thanks," I said. " Well, good-bye."

He seemed to be waiting for something.



It was an occasion when Joe had to move quick, and he did so. He had perhaps a foot to spare, or it may have been eight inches.

"Good-bye," I said again. "I don't want to hurt your feelings, laddie, but I must decline to continue in your society. We are nearing civilization now, and at any moment some friend of mine might see me in your car, which would jeopardize my social prestige. I will walk to the nearest railway station."

"But, gawblimey——!"

"Now what?"

"Aren't you going to take that dog out of the car?" he said, specifying what sort of a dog it was in his opinion. He also added a few remarks in a derogatory spirit about myself.

"Me?" I said. "Why? I simply sold him to you. My part in the transaction is ended."

"But how'm I going to get to Sandown if I can't get into my car?"

"Why do you want to get to Sandown?"

"If I'm late, it means hundreds of pounds out of my pocket."

"Ah?" I said. "Then, of course, you'll be willing to pay large sums to anyone who helps you to get there. I don't mind lending you a hand, if it's made worth my while. Removing dogs from cars is highly specialized work, and I'll have to insist on specialist's prices. Shall we say fifty quid for the job?"

He yammered a good deal, but I cut him short.

"Take it or leave it," I said. "It's all the same to me."

Whereupon he produced the stipulated sum, and I opened the door and hauled the dog out. And Joe got in without a word and drove off. And that, Corky, is the last I have seen of the man. Nor do I wish to see him again. He is slippery, Corky. Not honest. A man to avoid.

I took the dog back to the cottage, and bellowed for the bearded cove.

"I sha'n't want this, after all," I said. "You can have him."

"Ah?"

"I don't want this dog."

"Ah! Well, you won't get your five shillings back."

"God bless you, my merry peasant," I said, slapping the cove genially abaft the collar-stud. "Keep it with my blessing. I toss such sums to the birds."

And he said "Ah" and pushed off; and I toddled along to see if I could find a station. And I sang, Corky, old boy. Yes, laddie, your old friend, as he strode through those country lanes, trilled like a bally linnet.

NEXT day I looked in at the pawnbroker's, shelled out the requisite cash, recovered the brooch, and bunged it back into the bureau drawer.

And on the following morning my aunt turned up in a taxi and, having paid it its legal fare, backed me into the library and fixed me with a burning eye.

"Stanley," she said.

"Say on, Aunt Julia," I said.

"Stanley, Miss Vining tells me you refused to allow her to obtain my diamond brooch."

"Quite right, Aunt Julia. She wanted to break open your bureau drawer, but I would have none of it."

"Shall I tell you why?"

"It was because she had lost the key."

"I am not referring to that, as you know very well. Shall I tell you why you would not let her break open the drawer?"

"Because I respected your property too much."

"Indeed? I incline to think that it was because you knew the brooch was not there."

"I don't understand."

"I, on the contrary, did—the moment I received Miss Vining's letter. I saw it all. You pawned that brooch, Stanley! I know you so well."

I drew myself up."

"You cannot know me very well, Aunt Julia," I said, coldly, "if you think that of me. And allow me to say, while on this subject, that your suspicions are unworthy of an aunt."

"Never mind what they're unworthy of. Open that drawer."

"Break it open?"

"Break it open."

"With a poker?"

"With anything you please. But opened it shall be, now, and in my presence."

I gazed at her haughtily.

"Aunt Julia," I said, "let us get this thing straight. You wish me to take a poker or some other blunt instrument and smash that bureau?"

"I do."

"Think well."

"I have done all the thinking necessary."

"So be it!" I said.

So I took the poker, and I set about that bureau as probably no bureau has ever been set about since carpentry first began. And there, gleaming in the ruins, was the brooch.

"Aunt Julia," I said, "a little trust, a little confidence, a little faith, and this might have been avoided."

She gulped pretty freely.

"Stanley," she said at last, "I wronged you."

"You did."

"I—I—well, I'm sorry."

"You may well be, Aunt Julia," I said.

So I took the poker, and set about that bureau as probably no bureau has ever been set about since carpentry first began.

And, pursuing my advantage, I ground the woman into apologetic pulp beneath what practically amounted to an iron heel. And in that condition, Corky, she still remains. How long it will last one cannot say, but for the time being I am the blue-eyed boy and I have only to give utterance to my lightest whim to have her jump six feet to fulfil it. So, when I said I wanted to ask you to dinner here to-night, she practically smiled. Let us go into the library, old horse, and trifle with the cigars. They are some special ones I had sent up from that place in Piccadilly.

# Australian Cricket and Spectators

By

# MAURICE TATE

**(The Famous England and Sussex Player)**

*ILLUSTRATED BY "RIP"*

AT a time when our English cricket-grounds are being patronized by thousands on thousands of spectators in order to watch the stern fights for the "Ashes" between England and Australia once more, as well as other notable struggles of worthy teams against our welcome visitors, it has struck me that a few experiences of my own with regard to games, grounds, players, and spectators out in Australia may perhaps not be out of place, and may even prove interesting to the many readers of this well-known magazine.

The Australian grounds of renown are often much different from our own. They are frequently larger, nearly always better equipped both for the comfort of watchers of the game and players of it, whilst their score-boards give far more details as to how the game stands than do those generally seen on English grounds. Indeed, the score-board at Sydney is so complete in this way that one wonders how any other detail could possibly be placed upon it! It always shows you exactly what each man has scored and how he was out, in all the innings, and is as complete a record of the game—nay, even more so!—as an English "Card! Score-up-to-the-last-wicket" can be.

When away in Australia I found that I liked one ground for one thing, and another for another, in a somewhat unusual way. For instance, whilst all the pitches out there in an average summer (*our* winter, remember) are hard as iron, and the bowler feels his feet beneath him quite unable to grip the pitch when he runs to deliver the ball, yet I discovered that on the Sydney ground I could make my feet, for the only time, really get some help from the soil under me. Which is no doubt why I bowled better in the matches at Sydney.

Maurice Tate in a characteristic attitude.

I liked this ground best, too, for the spectators and their "barracking" remarks. This barracking system is almost unknown in our own land, at least to the degree and severity which one finds extant out there. It often seriously upsets some players, especially those coming from England who have to endure it for the first time. Luckily, I am one of those who can take a lot of it, and laugh all the same! Which is always

the best way of treating it, if you wish the crowd to adopt a more kindly and favourable attitude.

Herbert Sutcliffe, during our last visit to Australia, became at once a big favourite with the spectators, even before he had shown his wondrous ability for making centuries out there, simply because they delighted in the way he took their barracking. When some spectators got tired of the careful play of himself and Hobbs on one occasion soon after we landed, and began to yell out, "Now then, Sutcliffe, don't keep patting 'em!" and "What about hitting the ball for a change?" the Yorkshireman smilingly waved his bat to them in friendly greeting and genially bowed. Which amusing acts so pleased them that afterwards they hardly barracked him again all the time we were out there.

Sutcliffe genially bowed.

On another occasion Roy Kilner won equal admiration and favour by the jovial and jaunty way he altered the side-slope of his cap, in response to a little barracking, as if intimating by that action, "Well, boys, now we'll set about the job!" The crowd was much amused, and cheered him heartily all the rest of the innings whenever he made a fine hit—and Roy made very many, too.

Speaking of Kilner, he was ever a big favourite with the masses on various grounds, for the famous smile never left his face, whatever the state of the game; and he would bandy words with the "chaffers" outside the ropes, and seldom come off second-best, too! A thing these spectators always enjoyed to the utmost. He was fielding out in the country in one important match whilst an Australian batsman had been playing so slowly and painfully as to weary the patience of his own countrymen, who had barracked him unmercifully. Suddenly the English captain made a gesture to Roy to come and bowl, just as he was leaving his position at the end of an over. On which a spectator near called out loudly:—

"For Heaven's sake, Kilner, bowl that chap out next over, and I'll give you a quid!"

Kilner laughed and nodded as he went off. As it chanced, he *did* bowl the man out, on which, without waiting for the next batsman to come along, Roy set off, with his face beaming like the full moon on a clear winter's night, towards the spectator to "collect" the money. At this everybody around laughed till their sides split, so to speak; and the victim, though perhaps he had not really meant what he said, could not get out of it, as folk laughingly called out, "See you get the quid, Roy!" So the money was handed over gracefully, and pocketed by the clever little bowler, who then went back to get rid of one or two other foemen at the wickets, amid the cheers of the crowd.

If Australian spectators do much more barracking, and that much more severe, than our own English grounds ever know, at all events it must be said in fairness that the spectators barrack their own men quite as much as they do any visitors—indeed, I have sometimes thought more so. One hears curious remarks, and queer shouts, in this way now and then.

At Melbourne, during the second Test match, on New Year's Day, Chapman and Woolley for a time stood so near the pitch for catches that if they moved forward an inch or two they were invariably on the pitch itself. As they both, ever watchful, kept walking to and fro, it happened more than once that they did really take a step or two too far in that direction. On which the crowd would be heard yelling: "Get off the wicket, you two long 'uns! Don't keep scratching it up for the bowlers!" As it chanced, however, both these fieldsmen had rubber-soled shoes, not spiked ones, so no harm was done in that way to the ground.

At Melbourne, when I had done a bit of good bowling, a man near where I was fielding next over tossed me one or two apricots, which were very much appreciated by me, as they quenched what was becoming a serious thirst in the hot sun. The ring saw that I evidently enjoyed the fruit, so next over I was fairly pelted with apricots when I went to take up the same position. For spectators out there are very fond of bringing fruit galore with their lunch, and apricots are big favourites with them. Well—I got far more apricots than I wanted during that afternoon!

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not very effective at the time, though even before that a man had yelled out, " What are you trying to do, Tate ? You'd get a wicket better the other way ! "

Strangely enough, when I altered my tactics once more back to my ordinary style, I almost at once took a wicket. On which there arose loud cheers from that section of the ropes where this man was, and he himself could be heard calling : " There, didn't I tell you ? Why not have done it before ? " Which, of course, made the spectators cheer harder than ever.

When Australia was compiling that notable six hundred against us at Melbourne, in the second match, the masses outside the ropes got very sarcastic at our ineffective bowling, and chaffed all us bowlers greatly. Even our captain did not escape the sarcasm, for when he on one occasion seemed nonplussed as to which change of bowling to try next, a raucous voice could be heard calling : " Now then, Gilligan, did *all* your best bowlers miss the boat ? "

The heat, the long journeys, the many successive days of Test matches, as compared with English ones, as well as other items combine to try severely most of our cricketers who have to face Australia out there, especially if it is their first visit. Many little difficulties occur now and then which would never happen in our own land. Thus, when Victoria and New South Wales met in a State match some years ago, the varnish on bails and stumps had become so softened by the heat that the bails adhered firmly to the wickets, so as to make a ball which struck the stumps quite hard during the time when batsmen were running fail to knock the bails off, though the batsman making for that end was palpably " out " at the moment.

I was fairly pelted with apricots.

Naturally English players who go to Australia with a Test team, being more or less well known to sportsmen before their selection at all, are welcomed there by numbers of folk whom they have never seen nor heard of previously, receive presents and advice unstintingly from known and unknown admirers " down under," and find themselves again and again in curious predicaments and novel situations. I can recall several such *contretemps*.

A stranger came one day to see me at the hotel, talked for a short time about Tests, and went off saying, as he put a volume down on the table, " There's a book worth reading, Mr. Tate, that I have brought for you. And may I say that if you look at the place marked you will see how best to get opposing batsmen out ? "

He departed, with my thanks, and I took up the book. It was a volume called " Nottinghamshire Cricket and Cricketers," by Mr. F. S. Ashley Cooper, with a leaf turned down at one place, which I then looked into, and found marked in pencil some lines as follows :—

*" (He) did not bowl to break one's leg,*
*Nor yet to smash the jaw ;*
*He dropped 'em dead on the middle peg,*
*Like Southerton and Shaw ! "*

Well, I entirely agreed, as I burst out laughing. If only I *could* " drop 'em dead on the middle peg " half as well as " Southerton and Shaw " used to do, then certainly we should beat Australia, and win easier than we imagined ! But—*what* an " if " !

This reminds me that more than once I actually had folk, perfect strangers to me, calling on the telephone and telling me how I could best dispose of such noted batsmen as Collins, Kelleway, etc. Why those folk should want to see their own side thus cleared out I never could tell. Why they should specially desire to help *me* in that way was beyond my comprehension. But two such cases come now prominently to my mind. One voice over the 'phone ran :—

" I say, Tate, I can tell you how to get rid of Bardsley pretty soon ! Do you hear ? "

" Yes, thanks ! " I replied.

" Well, bowl him three good-length balls, and make him play straight. Then whip him in a very fast shooter. . . . You've got him, ten to one ! "

I thanked the kindly stranger, and hung up the receiver sadly. The idea was probably all right ! But Warren Bardsley is not a young bird to be caught by simple

wiles. Let me turn to another similar occasion of generous advice.

" Tate," came over the 'phone, " I suppose you'd like to clear off Herbert Collins pretty quickly to-morrow ? "

I answered that nothing would afford me greater pleasure ; on which the other continued :—

" Well, this will do it, my boy ! Just you make him play at two or three off balls ; then send him on a fastish straight one. He'll play too easily at it, and be bowled."

Would he ? He might, of course ! But, again, I know Mr. Collins and his strokes fairly well, and "I hae me doots." At any rate, I don't think it can be truthfully said that I personally derived much aid from such sagacious counsel over the telephone as to how to get Australia out. And, moreover, one is always inclined to mistrust what the old Latin author whom we used to read at school called " the Greeks bringing gifts."

**When the unsuspecting Hardstaff arrived at the gate, he found his entrance barred.**

Whether our own team was as jovial and as fond of joking as other English elevens out there have been I, of course, cannot say. But one or two folk who had met previous English teams at Melbourne and Sydney certainly fancied we were more serious, if I might judge by what they said on this point. Indeed, an Australian told me so bluntly, and recalled some of the practical jokes carried out, and the funny things said, by more than one former English tourist. A good story of that splendid Kentish hero, Colin Blythe, who " played the game " so grandly in the Great War, and fell as heroically as any, is worth repeating here, I think.

It appears, from my companion's story, that when the English team was playing at Melbourne, Blythe, Hardstaff (Notts), and two others were going to the ground when the Kent man saw his way to a bit of fun with little Hardstaff, who, being a new man at that time, was not nearly so well known to Australians as some others in our eleven. So Blythe strolled carelessly ahead as the party neared the gates, and said to the man in charge there :—

" You see that little fellow ? " (pointing to the Notts player). " Well, he's been following us about for the last hour, and we *can't* get rid of him ! "

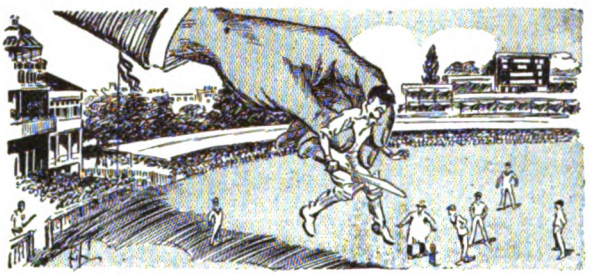
Which was, of course, quite true, though naturally the gateman misunderstood it. So when the unsuspecting Hardstaff arrived at the gate, he found his entrance barred, to his great surprise and annoyance, though to the delight of his companions, amongst whom nobody looked more innocent or astonished than Colin himself. And before the janitor would admit him Hardstaff had to produce letters, cards, etc., to prove his identity. On which the annoyed gateman looked around for Blythe. But that worthy youth had by this time very discreetly vanished inside the pavilion.

Poor Blythe, with his jokes, his fine voice for singing, and his splendid playing of the violin, lies dead on the gory fields of France. But—we are glad to know it, too !—Hardstaff still survives, and no doubt well remembers this practical joke played on him when at Melbourne.

I may here mention a chat which I had with an Australian player who knows most of our English cricket-grounds well, and who insisted that one reason why England often failed in Test games was because the selectors in our own land (whoever they might be) hardly take sufficient account of the difference certain grounds make to certain batsmen and bowlers. He gave some instances, which appear to me worth recording in an article like this.

" I should always put Holmes (Yorks) into a match at Lord's, and Sutcliffe into one at the Oval," he said. " The records of the one at Lord's and the other at the Oval are simply amazing, and show the immense influence that a particular ground has on the batsman. Just as a bowler who will suit Trent Bridge wonderfully may be quite out of his element at Lord's or Manchester. On the Notts ground the man

who can let the ball go with a high action, and come fast from the pitch, will almost surely have much success; whereas these things are not nearly so needful for a fine bowler at Manchester! Your English selectors seem to us too often to overlook such important points."



"I should always put Holmes into a match at Lord's—

Well, it is not for me to say! Nor am I here criticizing past selectors of our own teams. I am just giving a reminiscence of a talk in Adelaide with one who, at any rate, knew what he was saying with respect to our teams and Test games.

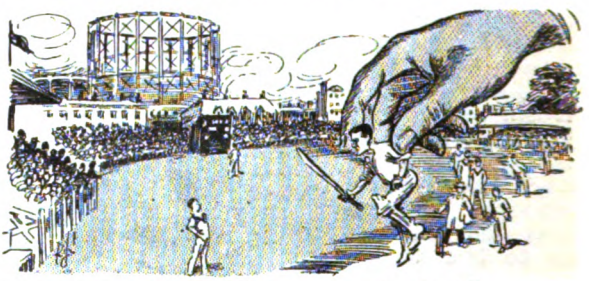
I spoke a while back about presents which visiting players receive when abroad from admirers and friends. An Australian lady sent me, when we were playing at Adelaide, a mascot in the shape of a Cupid, which she said was sure to bring me luck. Whether it did or not I have scarcely been able yet to decide. For, though I may have been signally successful with the ball here and there at times, yet at others, when I very much needed a special bit of extra luck, it didn't come my way, despite that Cupid mascot!

Another amusing present, which I now keep at my Brighton home as a reminder of that very pleasant tour in Australia, is a pair of extra-large slippers. My feet are rather above the ordinary size, I dare say, perhaps from so much use of them. The Australian cartoonists soon seized on this feature, and made me appear in their pictures with feet quite immense. And when it got into the papers that my toe was much bothering me, with equal facility the jokers put this down to my boots not being sufficiently large for my feet!

After a big match, therefore, there came to my hotel a man with a parcel, who asked if they would please give it to Mr. Tate, as coming from a friendly admirer. When I opened this package out fell a pair of amazingly big slippers—according to our system of "sizes" in England they must surely be "seventeens"! With them was a short note—no name or address on it—which said: "Guaranteed *not* to pinch your feet. But please don't tell Gilligan."

What the latter sentence really implied I have not even yet been able to determine. But I keep the gift very carefully, and it never fails to make friends laugh who see it at my home.

How quick Australian spectators and followers of the game are to pick up one's words, and make smart comments, often shows itself during such a tour. I happened to remark on one occasion to a companion that a certain thing, in my opinion, was what had brought about our defeat in more than one Test game. Like a flash he retorted:—



—and Sutcliffe into one at the Oval."

"What you want, old chap, is a Carr, Fender, or Gillingham over here, who would go in somewhere about seventh or eighth and risk all in smiting the ball hip and thigh! For nothing so soon upsets Australia's bowlers as to find fellows hitting them all over the shop as if they were mere club-trundlers!"

Just so! But then, isn't this what every team always wants badly? Some fellow who will go in and knock off bowlers who are doing too well? Speaking seriously, however, I do think this man was not far off the mark. Hobbs and Sutcliffe time after time gave us such a splendid start that we ought to have won the match from it. And one or two others later would come along with a bit of support, sometimes this man, sometimes that. But there was nobody who regularly continued to back up those splendid first-wicket efforts. Whereas again and again, when we looked likely to pull off the match, the men from "four" onwards down to the end (of course, I include myself) did not manage to do that "knocking off," or to show those "smite-and-risk-it" attitudes which so often might have won the game for England.

It is surprising even to enthusiastic English sportsmen to see how tremendously keen Australian folk are on their men winning Test matches, and (in local contests) their own State defeating the rest. It was not at all unusual for big firms, noted business houses, or wealthy private folk to offer valuable prizes to Australian players who excelled themselves on such occasions. Hobbs mentioned that he knew of one firm in Sydney who on a previous tour had offered a sovereign to any batsman who made fifty, with sixpence for every extra run, and five pounds in addition if he compiled a century. So that such a successful batsman might get the nice present of seven pounds five shillings for a century, as well as the usual payment for expenses, etc.

As the same firm offered five pounds to any bowler who took five wickets in the match, and fifteen pounds if he did the hat-trick, with ten shillings to any man making a catch, you may be sure that nothing was going to be missed in the field that could possibly be done in the way of " outing " the opposing host ! But this just shows you how keen the Australian crowds and people are in the matter.

If you get a bowler who can make extra use of the Melbourne pitch's occasional eccentricities you may go far to winning the match there at any time. There is a fall in the pitch, a slope, of nearly ten inches. When Sydney Barnes was out with a former English team he managed to take great advantage of this. But it isn't every one of us who can do it as well as he did. The clayey nature of the Merri Creek soil, of which this pitch is made, causes the wicket to prove very awkward in bad weather. If Kilner or Parker to-day, as did Blythe and Shaw in past days, finds help of this kind when bowling, then England really has a capital chance of defeating the foe. But usually the wicket at Melbourne is as hard as—or harder than—that at Sydney and Adelaide.

The long waits by a man who is next batsman, if the men at the wicket are doing extremely well, are much more trying in Australia than at home, for various reasons. I recall a very amusing tale which Jack Hearne was fond of relating, as to such an experience that he himself had on a previous tour. It was the fourth Test there, and Wilfred Rhodes and Jack Hobbs went in on Friday afternoon, with Gunn and Hearne waiting for the fall of a wicket. You know how much the tension acts on one at such a time in any big match. But here was Jack waiting all that Friday and all the Saturday, during which the two fine batsmen kept going, until one of them was out almost to the last ball of the day.

Then on Monday morning in went George Gunn. And he stopped with Hobbs until late into the afternoon, Hearne once more waiting expectantly nearly all day (the third in succession) for his innings. At last his turn came ; but, tired to death with waiting, tension, and expectancy, even the imperturbable Jack was a trifle out of gear, and—was out for a " duck " almost as soon as he reached the stumps ! But who can wonder at that when the batsman had had such a terrible trial already ?

You see, such a thing could not possibly have happened at a Test match in our own country. But it just shows what our teams " down under " have to undergo in ways that the average man in England quite overlooks or never dreams of. Indeed, playing in Tests in Australia is very different from what it is here ; and probably it is because even the selectors themselves — who have not always even been to Australia, let alone played there — do not fully wake up to this fact that our elevens for the past score years have scarcely done as well as one might have expected at Test games in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia.

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If I may be allowed to mention another point which struck me when playing against Australia's might, it is that the fielders there are particularly soon upset by two batsmen who can manage to steal short or risky runs very successfully. Nothing " rattles " the foe so much as this, I think. I myself saw it again and again in several instances

during our tour, with that splendid pair (for understanding each other in this), Hobbs and Sutcliffe. Indeed, the great "maker of centuries" one day told us that *he* had often noticed the same thing; and that he had never seen the Australians so much "rattled" as when he and Rhodes used to get runs that looked impossible, due to the wondrous way they backed each other up during their many famous partnerships out there.

I must say that it has often struck me how much Australian teams coming here have the advantage over our men when visiting their country. Take travelling alone. In *our* land the longest journey is merely an "afternoon outing" compared with what happens to English elevens when out there. The record for this is surely one mentioned by the late Alfred Shaw, of Notts renown, who took out an eleven which on one occasion was eighty hours on a journey! The team had to go by coach, and this vehicle got stuck in a swollen river-ford, and upset. Yet, despite the strain of long travel, loss of sleep, getting wet through, and the severe knocking about the team had endured, it entered the field of play within an hour of arriving at the town of action!

**Waiting expectantly nearly all day (the third in succession) for his innings—and the result.**

Now no Australian team over here has anything like that to endure. Nor has it the eight-ball "over," another native feature to which I personally—like all other English bowlers I know—am utterly opposed. Eight balls per over—and under a blazing sun also!—takes far too much out of any bowler, especially one from England who is unaccustomed to the novelty. It always places us at an immense disadvantage.

This sometimes turns to absurdity, too; as when Charles Kelleway, in one match against us, managed to bowl three no-balls. So that he had actually no less than eleven balls ere the over was ended. Fancy the comments here if any bowler were to send down eleven balls in one over—whatever the reason.

Then, too, even the Australian here and there sees an amusing side to this eight-ball affair, as I myself experienced when out in that distant land. It happened the day after I had been lucky enough to take four or five wickets in a few balls for hardly any runs, when the pitch just suited me. And the scene of the little comedy was at an hotel the same night, where I chanced to be with a friend. We heard two Australians who did not recognize us talking about the eight-ball over, and the English criticism on it.

One man strongly supported Australia's view, and gave his reasons, but the other opposed him keenly. And, as a sort of final shot, this man added:—

"Why, you silly blighter, with eight balls to the over, if Tate or Kilner got going as they did this morning, all our blessed team might quite possibly be out in a couple of such overs! What about that, eh?"

But the other's reply didn't reach us, for they were then outside the door. Yet we both laughed heartily at the amusing suggestion, and one of us, moreover, thought how much *he* would be glad for it some day to come to pass!

**Nothing "rattles" the foe so much as stealing short runs.**

I like Australia, and I like the Australians, both players and spectators. They are always good rivals, good friends, and good sportsmen. They enjoy a joke or tale against themselves as much as a true Yorkshire player does, which is saying a good deal.

I recall how much a well-known veteran Australian player of former days laughed

as he told me of an experience he remembered.

One of his comrades had a tremendous dislike for the bowling of that famous Tyke of past times, Peate, who had on one occasion upset his stumps almost directly by a wonderful leg-break ball. So the batsman made up his mind this should not occur again, and with a bat in his hand in his room at the hotel played all sorts of imaginary leg-break balls from Peate, muttering as he saw (in fancy) this ball smartly stopped, or another driven for a couple: "How do you like *that*, Peate?" "That got you, Peate, eh?" etc. Next morning, in the second innings of Australia, this man went confidently to the wickets, resolved to make a score that would "astonish the natives"—and others. But Peate bowled him out first ball!

The Australian who narrated the story laughed still at the remembrance of this, and at his comrade's amazement and blank despair. All those years after he still regarded it as a huge joke, just as good as ever. It is that kind of real sportsmanship, that genial spirit of "It's all in the game," which makes Australian players, spectators, etc., so attractive to me and such delightful friends. Let us hope that our Test matches this summer will be as well fought out as ever, with just the same good comradeship and keen rivalry on each side. And—may I add kindly—with just that bit of luck on *our* side this time, if there is to be any luck at all in the games!

# ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 154.
*(The Second of the Series.)*

ALL the year round, bird number one we view;
When comes the summer, comes bird number two.

1. Urgency, pressure, violence, or strain.
   Cut off its head, the hair will still remain.
2. A resting-place for many a weary head,
   The proper place to look for it is bed.
3. Four little words of equal length unite,
   In the result a solemn curse we write.
4. It may be parchment, listen to the drum,
   Upon the breakfast-table it may come.
5. A scamp who, if the word were rearranged,
   Into an Eastern sailor would be changed.
6. Great was the Emperor who bore this name.
   Reverse the word, and still it is the same.
7. A town in Scotland join to bovine sound,
   A county then in Ireland will be found.

PAX.

*Answers to Acrostic No. 154 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on May 11th.*

*To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 153.

OUR heroine has lost her sheep,
Our heroine fell fast asleep;
When, later on, her flock she found,
Were they in every detail sound?

1. A fleecy, frisking quadruped,
   His essays are with pleasure read.
2. Three-fourths of image here we view;
   A little sentence write, I do.
3. A knave, if this, a king can beat;
   Behead it, and we think of meat.
4. Four-lettered volume would you see,
   You merely have to write to me.
5. Better than never, not in time;
   Girl, number, fruit, and fish will rhyme.
6. A final letter add, to spell
   The continent wherein we dwell.

REMUS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. L | a m | B |
| 2. I | d | O |
| 3. T | r u m | P |
| 4. T | o m | E |
| 5. L | a t | E |
| 6. E | u r o | P |

NOTES.—Light 2. Idol, I do. 3. Rump. 4. One word, and two. 5. Kate, eight, date, skate. 6. Europe.

# THE WOMAN WHO FOUND WHAT SHE HAD LOST

By

## AUSTIN PHILIPS

*ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL*

I.

IN the Café Morgano at Capri the leading seascape painter in all America turned to a London nerve-specialist who was spending a spring holiday in the island.

"Who is that woman, Campion?" he asked, curiously. "I mean the one in the purple jumper. What, you haven't met her? Anyway, what do you make of her?"

"I think she looks nice. But I should say, probably, that there was a side of her which wasn't finding expression. I think, too——"

"That she looks unhappy?"

"Possibly! But even more bewildered—rather as if she had lost something and couldn't quite make out the reason for it. I know the man she's with, though. His name is Leckenby, and he paints portraits, and he's very clever and very hard-up, and altogether diabolically unscrupulous. I can tell you——"

The specialist's voice sank to a whisper. As he began to tell his story, the man and woman got up and left the *café*.

They passed into the piazza and then under an archway, and took the road towards the sea in the direction of the Punta Tragara.

"You mustn't come any farther!" said the woman.

"But I shall see you to-morrow!"

"Yes—at eleven!"

Francis Leckenby took her hand and held it tenderly, sighed audibly—as a judge of mankind might have said, designedly—and then turned away swiftly. The woman went on until she came to one of the villas set in the cliffside—a villa which had a motto above its lintel, in the manner fashionable at Capri: "*Parva Domus, Magna Quies!*"

"A little house—and much peace in it!"

Monica Winterton stood looking at the motto, which had been there when she and her husband had bought the villa—stood remembering how, proud of his scrap of Latin, Billy had translated as above, rather freely. She remembered how they had gazed on the place in sheer ecstasy and how they had made excuse, when first being shown over it, to get alone in one of the rooms and kiss each other. The thought of the present situation, of to-day's terrible anti-climax, mocked her and stabbed her and tortured her. For the peace had gone from the little house now—and with it had gone something which women of Monica's temperament must have, or perish: that is to say, love.

ENTERING now, she went up to her room, changed her frock, and came down to dinner. Her husband was waiting in the *salon*.

Neither of them spoke one syllable; but presently—as had become a dreadful habit—Monica found herself looking critically at this man whom she had married in their native Devonshire when he had been a bank-clerk at Exeter (where her father had been an architect), and before they had both inherited those considerable patrimonies which had led to Billy Winterton giving up his job and coming, at his wife's urging, to Southern Italy. For Monica had always yearned for "artistic" society; and in Billy, despite his physical strength, there had always been a touch of the literary dilettante; and the Fates, when they want to make folk miserable, have a trick of fulfilling their desires.

Billy! The athlete whom she had adored at eighteen and married at twenty—even now she was well under thirty. Billy! But how altered: Billy, still young but no longer slim, and with a definite curve about the waist-line; a lamentable failure at literature—as she herself was at painting—bad-tempered where once merry, grumbling

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perpetually, worrying about his health incessantly, become a very valetudinarian, abrupt and rude and thoughtless and self-centred as formerly he had been so considerate—in short, a perfect misery to live with.

An overwhelming wish—a deep and desperate yearning—to seek what she had lost, where formerly she had found it, before she sought it in another, led Monica one last time to speak tenderly to him.

"What have you been doing this afternoon, old Thing ?" she questioned.

"Playing Bridge !" His answer came gruntedly and snappishly.

"Winning ?"

"Of course not. Hands were rotten !"

"Will you be staying in this evening ? We might have some music !"

"No. I'm going out !"

"To the Murrays' ?"

"Yes—but what does it matter to you where I go ? You don't care twopence. You never did have a single ounce of sympathy. You know well enough I have perpetual headaches !"

"Then why don't you go and see that specialist at Naples, Billy ?"

"So that you can get rid of me for a day or two ! No. I don't believe in doctors. They're a set of humbugs and charlatans !"

Billy spoke fiercely and contemptuously. Monica now dropped all attempt at friendliness. She had tried too often and too hopelessly. But as the meal ended, and before he rose to go to the Murrays' villa—where there was an Austrian girl who was simply throwing herself at him—she sat considering him this last time, and her heart went to zero, and she felt too tragically certain that with Billy, her husband, she would never find again that love which was necessary to her existence.

II.

HABIT is ten times Nature ; and Monica Winterton, daughter of Devon and used to moorlands, could still walk like a British woman, here in Italy. She was striding at this moment along the zigzag road above the sea.

She paused presently, and stood looking out across the Bay of Naples. But it was not that City of Evil which caught her eye. It was something on the island just below her—of all things, a football ground with goal-posts, set up since the war by the islanders. An acute nostalgia gripped and shook her—a longing for England, Devon, Home !

Resolutely she resumed her walking, and came presently to Anacapri and reached a villa which looked northwards and seawards, and went through into a studio.

Leckenby was there, working. With a cry he dropped brushes and palette, then came forward, caught Monica's hands and kissed them. A moment or two later she removed her hat and mounted a kind of daïs ; and he resumed the painting of her portrait.

It was, indeed, the final sitting ; and he was putting in the ultimate touches. As he worked, so his sitter remained watching him. All the time she was asking herself one question. Might she, would she, could she find and know with this man (who seemed so to worship her) that love which she had lost and for which she so hungered—and which was necessary to her life and her being ?

THE portrait should have been completed several weeks ago, but Leckenby had deliberately procrastinated, for, a man of a certain intuition though not of the finest quality, he had long since seen that Monica was unhappy. Young, ambitious, determined at any price to become successful, he had been flattering her most subtly and most delicately. He did not love her—he loved nothing but himself—but he wanted, and wanted desperately, the thing which he had never had—money. He knew well that a loveless woman, like a bored one, is of all conquests easiest to make.

"It is finished," he said at last, beckoning to his sitter to descend and examine the painting, which he had never previously permitted her to look at.

Monica came down from the daïs and stood regarding her portrait. A great amazement enveloped her, and she thrilled all over with pleasure. He had enhanced her Junoesque beauty. He had put something—which was "yearning"—into her expression, and had suggested a great power of loving. Though he lacked the things which make men great, he was truly, diabolically clever ; and his cleverness, in this one instance, had become genius, fanned by his passionate desire for money.

"Do I really, really look like that ?" she managed to ask him presently, speaking breathlessly, and blushing most noticeably.

"Yes. At any rate, that is how *I* see you. You think the portrait unsatisfactory ?"

"Oh, no, no. Not unsatisfactory—only just different from what I've been expecting. You've made me better-looking than I thought I was, but yet you've made me somehow look unhappy—as if I lacked something."

"So you do."

"Do I ?"

"Yes, yes, yes. I've watched you ever so carefully. I've known you so long now. I realize how superior you are to your husband, and how little he understands you.

I'm so dreadfully sorry for you, Monica. Won't you—won't you let me make you happy ? "

As he spoke, Leckenby took a step towards her ; and an instant later Monica—whom her husband never thought of kissing nowadays—was taken in his arms and crushed close to him. She fought to free herself. Presently, indeed, she ceased striving. Her love for love—not for him !—was stronger than her will. She was in his power ; and he was pouring out passionate protestations.

" You don't love your husband. You know he neglects you. You know you're starving for affection. You know you have wonderful things in you, and no one to give them to. I can appreciate you. I can make you happy. I love you with all my fibres ! "

It was a long time before he would release her. Indeed, he only did so when she began crying—silently, but her whole body shaken with suppressed sobbing.

" Yes, I am miserable ! " she admitted, when at last she had recovered herself somewhat. " I want love—and home affection—more than I want anything. I am starving for it ; and it's true that my husband has ceased to care for me. I do think you might make me happy. I'm not an unfaithful woman—and it's a frightful, an appalling decision to make ! "

Leckenby continued to protest to her. She listened, checked him, listened again, then rose to leave the studio.

" I can't settle things now," she said. " But if I come to you, we must, of course, leave Capri. I must go home, to think quietly."

"And when will you let me know your decision ? "

" In a day or two. I will write to you. No, don't come with me. I want to be by myself ! "

## III.

OUT in the Grande Marina the steamer for Naples awaited its passengers, who already were being borne aboard in rowing boats ; while the voices of the fishermen singing Neapolitan songs to their fares for money came floating up to Monica Winterton as she walked down the hill-road back to Capri.

With pounding, throbbing heart she paused to look at the little vessel, wondering, wondering, wondering.

Would she, too, be a passenger in a day or two ? Would she be travelling beside, or to hold rendezvous with, Francis Leckenby ? If so, where were they to fly to ? It would surely have to be somewhere out of England, which he hated, protesting that it lacked sunshine. Yet by the strangest of nostalgias it was Devon—and above all that same city of Exeter whose dust she had once shaken from her feet so contemptuously—that she longed for and would most choose to see.

She reached the outer piazza, where is the station of the funicular railway. Even as she passed through it a familiar figure flashed by her to the train, which was just starting on its steep descent to the harbour.

It was Billy—and carrying a suit-case.

She did not attempt to detain him ; and he had not (she thought) noticed her in his hurry. It struck her at once that he was perhaps going to Naples in order to see a specialist concerning those headaches which he had been making such a fuss about.

And she rejoiced that he had made this decision ; for she would be really alone—and could think.

PASSING into the inner piazza, she made a number of purchases, and then walked out to the villa.

On the mantelpiece in the studio was a note, in her husband's handwriting.

*" Dear Monica," it ran, " I am off for a change, and I don't know when I shall be back. Don't expect me for a long time. I am sick of—and fed to death with—Capri ! "*

She remained a long while, staring at it. Then a friend was announced—a young girl from the West Country who had come out with an introduction to her and who was wildly keen on Art, and still more wildly keen on meeting the literary and artistic people who enjoyed the Wintertons' hospitality—while secretly laughing at both of them.

" Darling Mrs. Winterton," gushed the visitor. " I dashed in because I wanted to talk pictures with you. I guessed you would be alone, for I saw your husband leaving the jetty in a boat for the steamer with that Austrian girl. You know she's off home and is wild about it, and I suppose he's helping her across Naples ! "

The visitor stayed to tea, and stayed on afterwards. When at last she left the villa, Monica, agitated and nerve-wrung, picked up Billy's little note again.

It was enough. A frightful impulse seized her : an immense heart-hunger, an overwhelming, all-compelling impulse to find love where she believed it was waiting for her. She felt absolved of all duty towards her husband. After all, he had his own money, and she had a just and proper right to happiness.

"You don't love your husband. You know he neglects you. I can appreciate you. I can make you happy."

So she took pen and paper and wrote rapidly.

*"I will come away with you. Since we are to go, let it be immediately. The day after to-morrow I shall have packed and shall be ready to take the morning boat to Salerno, and thence go on through Sicily to Tunis. Come and see me off—and follow later. I will do my best to make you happy."*

Then she ran up to the post-office in the odd little square off the piazza, and put the note for Leckenby in the letter-box. After that she passed out to the terrace beside the railway-station and looked long upon the distant lights of Naples, that most evil city in all Europe, where Billy, the ex-bank-clerk she had once adored so, had gone with that Austrian that same day.

IV.

"I SHALL never forget what you are doing for me, Monica!"

"I hope—oh, I hope you won't. I shall wait for you at Palermo. Are you quite, quite sure I am right in leaving Billy?"

The big brown eyes of Monica Winterton asked the great question of Francis Leckenby. He remained looking back at her, putting into his expert and selfish eyes—those of the calculating sensualist—all the fervour and the ecstasy which he was capable of simulating. Then his glance went in triumph to Monica's baggage, to be called for in another twenty minutes and taken down to the steamer for Salerno, whither he was going to follow by a different route in a day or two, to begin their new life, which for him would mean living on her money, making good on it, painting no longer what he must but what he wanted to, having a one-man show presently in London—and intending, when finally it was possible, to cut adrift from this Philistine, middle-class woman whom at heart he so despised secretly.

"Right in leaving Billy?" he echoed presently and fervently. "Right in leaving him! Why, aren't you and I just made for one another?"

He came forward, and his arms went round about her, and she was on the point of kissing him back ardently, more than ever ready, now, to find in him all that love which she had lost—and more also.

Suddenly she started and half released herself, raising her head to listen.

"What's that?" she asked, breathlessly. "Didn't you hear someone coming?"

Leckenby stood listening likewise. The maid was out, dispatched designedly on a message to some acquaintances of her mistress at the other end of the island.

Then the door of the room opened; and the couple moved apart with great rapidity.

For Billy Winterton was standing on the threshold — Billy, who stood looking towards them most strangely.

"You've got somebody with you!" Monica heard him say, after a pause of nearly ten seconds.

"Yes." (She tried to carry things off easily, trusting he had not seen the embrace, and wondering how she was to explain the trunks and suit-cases, and proposing to herself to say that she had decided, in his absence, to pay a month's visit to the mainland.) "Of course I have, Billy. Can't you see Mr. Leckenby?"

"No, I can't, Monica!"

"What, Billy!"

"No—you see, it was Janet Murray who brought me back here, just now, from the steamer and the funicular—you see, I can't see!"

"Can't see!"

"No. I'm stone blind!"

As he spoke, Billy advanced a little, with arms outstretched as though to feel his way, and then half stumbled over a footstool.

"Billy! Why are you playing the buffoon with me? Don't be so silly. It isn't in the least bit really like you!"

But Billy did not reply for a moment or two—not until his groping hands had found a chair and he had seated himself upon it very cautiously.

"I'm not playing the buffoon," he explained at last. "But you've been altogether mistaken, Monica. When I was ill—and when I worried you so by complaining about my headaches—I wasn't pretending. I was really going blind—and it happened suddenly at Naples, between my visits to the doctors. The oculist calls it 'glaucoma'!"

"Glaucoma!"

"Yes. 'Glaucoma Fulminans'—it's a well-known form of sudden sightlessness which is preceded by pains such as came to me. I'm simply terribly sorry about it. But you mustn't let me interfere with your life, Monica—or with any plans you may have formed—or in any way be a nuisance to you. Thank God, I've got enough money to live upon, and to pay someone to look after me!"

There was a long and afflicting silence now. Billy sat on, with head bowed as though his eyes were torturing him. Leckenby stood grasping a chair-back, biting his nails—which was a habit of his.

As for Monica, she was looking most intently at her husband. She had recovered from the first great shock—and in some strange way the blow must have acted as a

Then the door of the room opened; and the couple moved apart with great rapidity.

stimulant and have touched something surely lying dormant in her.

For her eyes had become as lamps of tenderness; and it seemed as if some illuminating light from Heaven had reached her very inmost soul now.

Then of a sudden she turned and motioned to Leckenby. The gesture was a perfectly simple one, and yet it contained absolute finality; and the painter, who knew life and women's lives, at once understood most completely. In another five seconds, without a word, without one gesture save a shrug of his shoulders and a curl of his lip which expressed his contempt of woman's changeableness, he had passed out of the room and the villa.

As for Monica, she went straight over to her husband. She was crying—crying steadily—and her feelings had undergone the completest, utterest transformation. The bowed man in the chair had ceased now to be that valetudinarian who had bored her so cruelly and unceasingly ever since they had left their native Devon; he was become, once again, her "boy at the bank"; her athlete, the love of her girlhood with whom she had been so truly happy when they lived and worked, side by side, in Exeter. Darkness was gone. Dawn had broken. Love and passionate protectiveness had their outlet. Monica had found what she had lost.

And she dropped upon her knees beside Billy now, and put gentle and tender arms round him, and covered his sightless face with kisses.

"You poor, darling old Thing!" she whispered. "Of course I sha'n't leave you. Of course you won't be a nuisance to me. I shall spend the rest of my life looking after you!"

A LONG, long silence followed—speech, as it seemed, temporarily taken away from this man and this woman, reunited so completely by Fate's monster-stroke.

Then—action ultimately becoming necessary to her—Monica got up and crossed the room to a box of silver, lined with cedarwood, and took from it a cigarette which she placed in her holder, and then looked round for the matches.

She could not find any. She turned back to Billy instinctively, with the intention of ascertaining if there were any in her sightless husband's pockets. But already a box was in his hand, and he took from it a match—which he struck deliberately and decisively, and after that held out to her.

Amazed, she looked at him—and at his eyes more than his hand. Yes, they had genuine tears in them; but intuition—swift, convincing, past all erring—brought her, as his whole manner brought her, sure and staggering certainty.

"Billy!" she cried out. "Billy!" And the cigarette and its holder fell floorwards from her nerveless fingers. "Billy! You've deceived me. You can see!"

"Yes, Monica. I can see. When I first came into the room, I saw you—saw Leckenby making love to you—and I thought you didn't care a damn for me, and, that being so, I didn't want to make a useless row or put you to shame—or to be humiliated, myself, any more than was absolutely necessary—and so—and so I gave you your chance, Monica!"

"Then your sight is good, perfectly!"

"Oh, yes. The doctor said my headaches were only due to liver and to leading a life that was unnatural to me, and never getting any exercise. So I had a quick idea—and I thought I saw at last where things had got wrong between us—and though I was more than afraid it was too late—for I guessed that Leckenby had laid siege to you!—I hurried back by a cargo boat, to ask you to come home with me to England!"

"England! But that's what I'm absolutely craving for!"

Again the couple stood looking at each other, hoping, thrilled and marvelling. Then, once more, Monica Winterton hurried forward and put tender and passionate arms round her husband.

"Darling old Thing!" she half sobbed in her overwhelming, new-old happiness. "Surely we've been walking in darkness. To-day light has come to us. It's all very well for old people and artists and invalids to live permanently in Italy, but you and I are too young, too active, and too healthy and too British for anywhere but Britain or the Colonies. Let's stop [illegible]ed o[illegible] here. Let's forget we were ever snobs about Art and Literature, and be content to look at pictures and books instead of trying to make them—and let's get back again to Devonshire!"

"And Sport, Monica!"

"Yes, Billy, darling. Cricket and golf and beagles and hounds, and all the clean, good life of the West Country. We've got money. We can spend it best in England. Surely that's the proper place to live!"

# THE REPTILE

## By AUGUSTUS MUIR

*ILLUSTRATED BY CONRAD LEIGH*

I.

"I'VE got a headache," said James MacAndrew.

"Better lie down," said Dr. Hardman.

"Aye, sir, I suppose so," assented MacAndrew, moodily.

"You see," explained Dr. Hardman, "we're going over the Rauch Museum this afternoon. A museum's the most tiring place in the world if you aren't fit. Simply make your head worse. With a bad headache nothing can be either pleasant or instructive. Better lie down, MacAndrew."

"I think that, sir," muttered James MacAndrew, "I'll just go." He made his way slowly upstairs to his bedroom, while Dr. Hardman, Lecturer on German Language and Literature at a Scottish University, hurried off across the lounge of the Berlin hotel to collect the other members of his party. Before the war, to take as many students of his Honours Class as cared to come for a week in Berlin had been Dr. Hardman's principal joy of the Christmas vacation. And now, for the first time since 1914, Dr. Hardman had revived his old custom. For sixteen hours a day he expatiated to a dozen of his modern-language students, all of them very Scotch and very shy. Dr. Hardman, that little, genial, chubby man, was an enthusiast; he packed the days and evenings with pilgrimages and talk, till you would have thought there was nothing more in Berlin to see or to know. He was vaguely irritated with MacAndrew for having a headache.

But MacAndrew, in the secret interstices of his soul, regarded his headache in the light of something Heaven-sent. His eyes were sick of the sight of pictures and kirks; he had almost acquired a crick in the neck from gazing up at pompous statues; and he was weary of those arid journeys to gaze upon a commonplace street notable only by the fact that it was garnished with the name of some author who had a column and a half of small type in German dictionaries of biography. With luck, the afternoon in his bed would see the headache gone; and, in any case, the respite would be pleasant. Wincing a little as he stooped, MacAndrew removed his boots, pulled up the tawdry pink quilt, and in ten minutes he was asleep.

MacAndrew was awakened by a firm touch on the shoulder. He sat up in bed. Two men were in the room. Then MacAndrew remembered that he had lain down with a headache, which was now nearly gone. But what in the name of creation, he wondered, were two strangers doing in his bedroom?

"We want you," said one of the men.

He was German: MacAndrew guessed by his appearance rather than his accent. The man was squat, with a broad head, hair cut short and standing upright, and thick, uneven features accentuated by a rough and pitted skin. He was smiling down at MacAndrew, but MacAndrew did not like the smile. The other man, at whom MacAndrew cast a quick glance, was a different type: thin and hollow-cheeked, with a nervous mouth behind a tiny, trim fair moustache, and beard, and below the corners of his mouth there were two smooth patches of skin, the size of shillings, on which beard did not grow. He seemed anxious to keep in the background, but his luminous brown eyes did not waver from MacAndrew, sitting up, rather tousled, on the bed.

"What is it ye want?" said MacAndrew as gruffly as politeness would allow: there might be some good excuse for the intrusion. Now that he came to think of it, he had a notion that he had seen the two men before. But where, he could not remember.

"I have made a mistake," said the squat man. "It is not we who want you. There is a friend who has sent us. We will take you to him—we have a motor-car waiting downstairs."

"Who is he?" demanded MacAndrew,

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puzzled. "There's nobody hurt, eh? It's not Dr. Hardman?"

The squat man shook his head. "There is no one hurt. It is a friend you do not know, but will you please come quickly—it is urgent!"

MacAndrew pondered for a moment.

"It seems a daft-like affair," he said, cautiously. "Somebody wants to see me, ye say? Well, what's his name?"

The man with the fair beard approached the bedside eagerly. "It will be to your advantage," he exclaimed. "But you must come now—at once—or it may be too late. We have our instructions to make haste."

"H'm!" muttered MacAndrew. "Is it far?"

"In the motor-car—no," declared the squat man. "We will go quick—you will be back very soon. That is so?" He turned to his companion for confirmation.

"Soon, certainly—you will be back before an hour," he said, hastily. "It is to your own advantage that we have come. Our friend is waiting. The interview will be short, and you will not be occupied many minutes. And listen! You will be well paid—you will be rewarded highly—for such a small favour."

"Oh, a favour, is it?" said MacAndrew. "Well, I want to know more about this favour. What d'ye want with me—I mean, what does this fancy friend of yours want?"

The squat man was about to speak, but his companion waved him back, and again approached the bed. MacAndrew flung aside the quilt, and put his stockinged feet to the floor.

"There is little time to spare, but I will explain!"

IT was then that MacAndrew remembered where he had seen the men before; a gesture, a shrug, a glance, an attitude—something suddenly recalled them vividly to his mind. They had been sipping a drink downstairs in the shabby hotel vestibule before lunch. He remembered, too, how they had been watching the passers-by with a certain curiosity, and how he had casually put them down as visitors interested, like himself, in the passing pageant of Berlin life. Why hadn't they tackled him before, if it was so urgent; or had they only noticed him after lunch as he turned to go upstairs to his room? In any case, they were probably mistaking him for somebody else. He was about to put a question on that point when the fair man proceeded:—

"It is a very small favour indeed. And, as I have said, it will not take many minutes. It may seem strange to you, but it would not be so if you knew the explanation. Our friend wishes a photograph of you. That is all."

MacAndrew glared incredulously. "A photo? A photo of me? What does he want with a photo of me?"

"I am sorry," said the squat man. "I cannot answer your question."

"And do ye think I'll come a footstep till ye do?" returned MacAndrew, tartly.

"But surely, if it is a matter——"

"Ye're wasting your breath, both of ye," said MacAndrew, roughly. "My own impression is that you're mixing me up with somebody else. My name's MacAndrew James MacAndrew."

"Your name is of no consequence," said the squat man with a little bow. "It is your appearance that matters. We are fortunate to have found you. As a matter of fact, you have an amazing resemblance to somebody—so strong that in a photograph it would appear to be the same person."

"Oh!" said MacAndrew, slowly. "Then I would like to know what this friend of yours is going to do with the photograph! Aye, and I want to know who is the man ye say I resemble!"

"His name does not matter," said the squat man.

"But how do I know that this isn't some plan to do him harm? Eh?" MacAndrew looked in suspicion from one to the other.

"No one can harm him," the fair man said quietly. "He is dead."

"Dead?" MacAndrew thought for a moment. "Then why all the fuss about——"

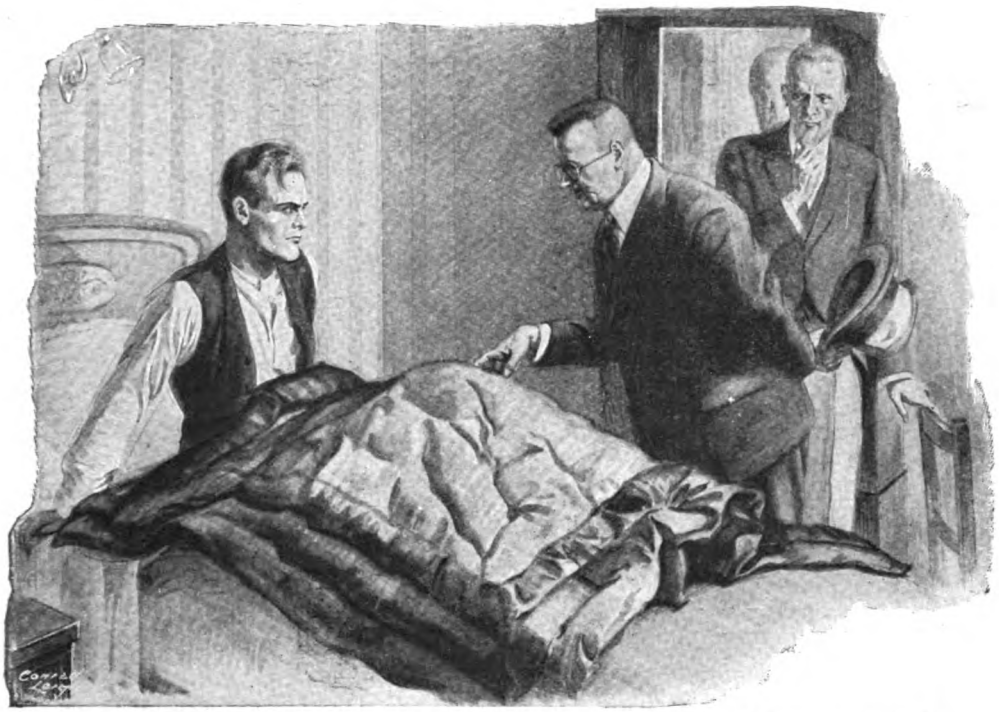
"It is a matter of vital importance for our friend," said the squat man with warmth. "He must have a photograph of the dead man to-day. To-day, do you hear? I cannot explain the purpose, but you must believe me—it is of vital importance. And he is willing to pay you for the favour. Look, here is a hundred marks." As he spoke he drew a note from his pocket and held it out. "We promise that you will receive another hundred marks from our friend immediately the photograph is taken. And we promise that you will be back here within an hour. Can any offer be fairer?"

The two men eagerly scanned MacAndrew's face. "You're a couple of queer fish," was his first thought. And this photo business was queerer still. The story might be true, or it might not. What earthly purpose could there be in having a photo of him, or, rather, of the dead man he so closely resembled? To say the least, it was unusual, this extraordinary offer: it was something quite out of the common rut of MacAndrew's experiences. Of course he wouldn't go; but their amazing request

would be something to tell Dr. Hardman at dinner—how prolific would be the little professor's speculations! And now, to get rid of the men without further fuss: that was the problem before him. The squat man was shoving the hundred-mark note in his direction; the other was tugging the second bank-note from his pocket. With care he laid both notes on MacAndrew's outstretched hand.

"Ah, you English! you English!" he remarked with a dry laugh.

"I'm no' English," declared MacAndrew, with pride. "I'm Scotch."



**MacAndrew was awakened by a firm touch on the shoulder. He sat up in bed. Two men were in the room. "We want you," said one of them.**

point of his yellow beard nervously. A hundred marks—nearly five pounds. Ten pounds altogether for one hour: not bad going for a fellow so persistently near the rocks as he was. Of course it might be lies, all of it; there might be dirty work; there might be a hard knock or two; well, he could look after himself. Besides, this was broad daylight—a quarter to three on a sunny winter afternoon. He got to his feet.

"I'll come," said MacAndrew, suddenly holding out his hand.

"Good! good!" cried the fair man, excitedly. "I thank you——"

"If you don't mind," said MacAndrew, stolidly, "I'll have the other hundred marks now, before we start. Your friend might forget about it afterwards in his hurry."

The two men glanced at each other. The fair man nodded, and the other drew a

"Ah!" They nodded, and smiled wryly.

"And now," said MacAndrew, "I'll see ye both downstairs in a couple of minutes." He held open his bedroom door.

II.

WHEN MacAndrew reached the vestibule the two men were not in sight. He was about to sit down in one of the spindly wickerwork arm-chairs and wait, but it occurred to him that he might see them if he strolled out to the front of the hotel. At the door he caught sight of the squat man in the street. With a quick gesture to him, the man hurried off. Thirty yards away, over the heads of the people on the side-walk, MacAndrew could see a closed car standing by the kerb.

The squat man held the door open. His companion was already inside, sitting back in the corner. The door slammed; the

squat man leapt beside the driver; the car moved off. MacAndrew smiled grimly.

It was a novel sensation, this. To sit here in a motor-car beside a man whom he suspected of having uttered a bundle of lies, in a city with which he was not familiar, and to ride calmly away without the least idea of what he was going to: that intrigued MacAndrew. It would indeed make a rich tale for Dr. Hardman at dinner—aye, richer than he had intended, for at first he had not meant to come. On second thoughts, he did not altogether disbelieve the photograph story; but what was behind it? If it looked like dirty work, if it came to blows—which was possible though unlikely—well, he could crumple up these two sprats with one big bony hand. And if it was his money they were after—if they were mere thieves—he had tricked them nicely. For while they awaited him downstairs, he had cleared his pockets and, with proper caution, locked away everything. He smiled as he recalled his foresight. But he strongly suspected that their game was something quite different.

They had told him the truth about the car, at any rate; it was swiftly threading through the crowded streets like a mouse through a stubble-field. He had no idea of their direction; but he observed that they were coming first to the suburbs, and then into country roads. It seemed a queer place to find a photographer, but MacAndrew made no comment. The car, after many turns, went down a lane and, at a large wooden gate, drew up.

MacAndrew had an impression of a dismal house, with tangled paths. They hurried in. It seemed to be a side-door they entered; for the passage inside was dark and had several bends; and then MacAndrew found himself ushered into a small room. The room was well furnished but was thick with dust. The man with the fair beard had not accompanied them.

"Look here," said MacAndrew, suddenly, "where is this you've taken me to?"

The squat man's eyes flickered to him quickly, but the expression on his heavy face did not alter by a line. He pushed a box of cigarettes across the table.

"You must ask no questions. That was agreed. And if it was not agreed, it is agreed now. You have accepted his money. You have been well paid for a simple favour——"

MacAndrew rose. "But what if I refuse to go on with it? If I tell ye that there's something about this business that's not to my liking?"

"You talk nonsense," said the squat man. "Besides, an agreement is an agreement."

"Did you think that in nineteen-fourteen?" cried MacAndrew, angrily.

"Insolence will not help matters," replied the squat man in a quiet voice, though his eyes were burning.

"Take back his dirty money!" shouted MacAndrew, his hand going to his inside pocket. Then he paused awkwardly, remembering that the money was at the hotel. The squat man smiled at his discomfiture.

"Ye can come back with me to my room now," cried MacAndrew. "Ye'll have every cent of it——"

"There is no going back," said the squat man, slowly. "We hold you to your promise. For one hour your services are—his."

"We'll see about that," muttered MacAndrew, grimly, buttoning his jacket.

The squat man glanced out of the window and smiled again. Following his gaze, MacAndrew could see the large wooden gate where they had entered. Beside it stood two men, each of them as big and powerful as MacAndrew himself.

So that was the game! He was a prisoner, a prisoner for one hour. Up to this point MacAndrew's faculties had been on the rack to try and penetrate to the truth about their motives; but now he flung all speculation to the winds, and with a quick movement leapt past the squat man, threw open the door, and made into the passage.

The passage was dark, and bent at sharp angles, but he remembered with fair accuracy the way they had come. There had been two doors in the passage, one open, the other closed.

MacAndrew made for the first door and dashed through. Somebody passed him in the darkness. He did not anticipate any real opposition till he reached the wooden gate outside. And even then, if he took these two burly fellows with a rush, he had little doubt that he could get clear. Many a time in the Rugby field he had broken through a cordon of such fellows, leaving them splayed out behind him. . . . MacAndrew blundered into the second door. It had stood open as they came in; someone had closed it. To his touch it swung back. MacAndrew moved forward. He stumbled against something that felt like a table. MacAndrew stretched out his arms. When he failed to touch the wall on either side, he realized that he was no longer in the passage, but in a room. Behind him he heard the door softly shut.

MacAndrew stood still, breathing quickly. He did not doubt for a moment that this was a trap; the door clicking gently shut behind him told him plainly that he had

**The squat man glanced out of the window. Following his gaze, MacAndrew could see two men, each as big and powerful as himself. So that was the game! He was a prisoner.**

been meant to enter here. He turned and groped back. As he expected, the door was locked.

III.

LIKE a thunder-cloud MacAndrew's wrath burst forth. He reviled himself for a fool; only a fool—and a young fool at that—would have run his head so blindly into such a business. If he had been plausibly and amiably approached in the hotel lounge, he knew he would have refused to come; but because his curiosity had been spurred by the blunt and urgent manner of their introduction, because the whole affair had had the semblance of a challenge to his self-confidence—to his Scotch ability to look after himself—and lastly because of the pure adventure and unusualness of it and the good money in his hand, he had fallen. He had fallen, and here he was, a prisoner, serving their obscure purpose in some

obscurer way. MacAndrew drew back and threw his twelve and a half stone of brawn against the door. Gritting his teeth in an access of fury, he hurled his weight again and again at the panels. The door did not budge.

He felt in his pocket for a match, but as he did so he closed his eyes and almost staggered. The room had been suddenly filled with a blinding light. It was like the flash of a photographer's flare. So it *was* a photo they wanted, these swine! As he opened his dazzled eyes he saw the room around him. And he realized that he was wrong about the photograph; their story was lies after all. They had merely switched on the electric light; but it had happened so unexpectedly that it had given for a moment the fictitious effect of one vivid flash. Slowly he grew accustomed to the light. And MacAndrew's eyes went straight to a couch in the corner.

Motionless on the couch there lay, under a long white sheet, the lineaments of a human form.

The stillness of death was on that figure. In his throat MacAndrew stifled a gasp.

What devilry was this he was involved in? Why had he been brought here? MacAndrew looked quickly around him. A carpet, a chair, a table, and that couch; on the table a man's hat, gloves, stick; heavy shutters padlocked across the window; a curtain masking a second door: that was all the room possessed—that, and the rigid form below the sheet. Like the other, the door behind the curtain was locked; they had forgotten nothing.

Did they mean him to look? Well, he wouldn't. He wouldn't. He sat down at the table and waited. A chilling suspicion rose in his mind that it was someone he knew who was below that sheet. That would be why they meant him to look. Well, he wouldn't; he wouldn't look. If they were watching him from a hidden cranny, they would be disappointed. MacAndrew took out his case and lit a cigarette. It meant a more dreadful effort of will than he had foreseen to keep the lighted match from trembling a little, but he succeeded. At any rate, they would suffer the chagrin of observing his care-free manner. MacAndrew could not explain why he felt he was being watched; but as the moments passed the impression strengthened.

The moments passed, and to refrain from looking grew more desperately difficult. What if it *were* someone he knew? Perhaps they would keep him here, just like this, in this locked and shuttered room, till he had whipped up his courage to cross to the couch. But it needed even more courage still to sit where he was and quietly smoke. With his determination to be calm, to be casual, the cigarette dropped from his fingers on the bare boards of the table. He was in the act of picking it up when his eye was fascinated by the figure below the sheet. The figure had moved. It was as if the body had drawn in one long, slow, uneasy breath. MacAndrew's cigarette lay unheeded, to burn a brown weal on the table and send in the air its thin waving spear of smoke. With quick strides he was across the room. He threw back the white sheet.

The figure he looked down upon was that of a young woman. The eyes were closed; the lips were parted; her body and limbs were pinioned with tough cord. As he watched, her lips quivered and a long breath was drawn slowly in, followed by short gasps, as if she were awakening from sleep. Then he saw her eyelids flicker; the whites of her eyes appeared; and he could hear a soft sickly moan. To MacAndrew the thing was patent. She had undoubtedly been drugged, and they had bound her and carried her here. She was now looking up at him in a dazed way, as if she were not quite certain he was there, and her eyes drooped shut again.

MacAndrew stepped back. It was all incomprehensible. That the figure below the sheet was a girl, and alive, though in a state of stupor, made the tangle of events more acute. He could see no purpose, no meaning; nothing save the perverted designs of pure brutality. The first thing to do was obviously to cut this girl loose; time enough to consider their escape when she had come to her senses. His right hand went into his trousers pocket for his penknife. Get her circulation back, let her breathe more freely, and she would soon recover. His hand, in his pocket, was disentangling the penknife from his bunch of keys, when a rustle across the room made him swing round. Behind the curtain, where a minute or two ago had been a locked door, there was a movement. He heard the sound of the door closing softly. MacAndrew's eyes widened; he found it difficult to credit his senses. Crawling from behind the curtain was a large snake.

## IV.

THE snake looked about five feet long, but might perhaps have been less. MacAndrew, in his first high flush of horror, could not judge. In the middle it was perhaps as thick as his wrist. The eyes were like two black pin-pricks of light; the skin was of a mottled pattern, and on anything but the lithe body of a snake would have been beautiful. It began to move slowly across the carpet; its head, three inches above the floor, was swaying vaguely.

MacAndrew took some time to recover from the paralysing grip of repulsion and surprise. He felt as though the blood pulsing through his veins had flowed in turn through fire and ice; and the raw physical sensations of fear, before it has been tempered by reason, left him momentarily weak. He found himself unconsciously slashing at the girl's bonds with his penknife, but with his mind he was watching the reptile.

MacAndrew stooped quickly and lifted the girl. Her head fell limply back. The snake made its way slowly across the room, passing underneath the table, till it reached the wall. Then it turned towards the couch and paused, its head still swaying from side to side, as if to music. But MacAndrew could hear no music. He could see its insignificant eyes, bright with evil, fixed on him, as he stood beside the couch with the body of the girl drooping and plastic in his arms. It came forward again. It was drawing nearer.

With a sudden movement, MacAndrew made out of the corner where the couch stood. He reached the table, quickly laid the girl upon it, then, exerting all his strength, pushed it into the opposite corner of the room. It was the only temporary place of safety he could devise. MacAndrew picked up the walking-stick from the table and, grasping it firmly, turned to face the reptile.

It was still moving inch by inch towards the couch, now and then raising its head higher, and lowering it to continue the rhythmic sway. It came round in a slow circle, as if to explore the confines of the chamber. It seemed to be disregarding their presence. But when it faced them again, MacAndrew saw the black glitter of its eye. In the horror of these moments as he faced it, the truth emerged mistily in his sick brain. The girl and himself were obviously in the hands of some lunatic: a lunatic whose debased satisfactions were knit up with the idea of death: death, and the more terrible the better. That hollow-eyed creature with the fair beard, he had probably wealth; and the other was his toady, fleecing him while he pandered to him. Death: and better still the death of a Britisher, and of an English girl: let the Britisher fight for both their lives, and let them both perish in horror and in agony.

Behind him on the table the girl's breath was coming in quick stresses, interpolated by gentle choking sighs. He glanced round. Her eyelashes were parted, but she saw nothing. She had turned over her head on her flaccid arm. MacAndrew put his hand behind him, and pushed her as far as he could from the edge of the table. The stick, in the fingers of his other hand, quivered.

The snake was near him now; it was time to act. MacAndrew took a step forward and hit out with all his might. He felt a sudden surge of dread as he realized that he had misjudged the distance by an inch. He staggered and almost fell before he recovered his balance from the abortive blow. The snake came towards him; it seemed to be almost at his feet; and with a gasp MacAndrew swung the stick back, putting his full force into the return stroke. He was just in time. The end of the stick got home behind the reptile's head, and it went writhing across the floor. MacAndrew watched it slide below the couch. Then it crawled back into the open, making the same wide circle as before, but moving more quickly, raising and lowering its head, and all the time coming nearer to him.

This time MacAndrew went out to meet it. He swung his stick, measuring the distance carefully with his eye. He realized that wild lunges were useless. It was vital that he reached the mark with every blow. If he were successful in striking it in the same place behind the head, there was a chance of dazing it. He gave a gasp of satisfaction as the second blow went home. The reptile coiled back in a mass, and the head shot out viciously. MacAndrew hit again; and again he felt the stick jar in his hand as the snake spun over on the carpet. But in a flash it had straightened out, and came round once more in a curve, its head making quick, angry jerks from side to side, its eyes glittering.

IN moments of acute emotion, the human brain plays strange tricks; a second seems an hour and the sizes of things are queerly altered. MacAndrew thought of how birds are lured to sudden doom, impotent in the green fire of an adder's eye. The snake in front of him took on strangely larger proportions, and the weapon in his hand seemed but a wisp of straw. MacAndrew shook himself, conscious that his nerve would give way with the static stress of prolonged inaction, and went forward again, and again hit out, flinging all his power and craft into the stroke. The reptile curled over on the carpet, its tail lashing upwards. Then with a swift lunge MacAndrew seized up the chair that lay toppled against the wall.

His chance came the next moment. Exerting every muscle, he crashed down the chair on the ugly head, leaping back to avoid the whipping tail, jumping in to strike at every opportunity. A sense of triumph gave power to his blows. Then he flung the chair down. The tail whirled up; the mottled body curled and writhed round the stout wooden legs; but its head was pinioned by the chair-back, and all his

weight was pressing on it. The next moment its head was below his heel, and with joy he heard the crunch.

Dazed, he watched the coils relax; they slipped to the floor with a soft thud. MacAndrew kicked aside the chair. The snake did not move. Still dazed, and by force of habit, MacAndrew suddenly stamped on his cigarette, which smouldered on the carpet. He was vaguely surprised that it was still burning. It seemed an eternity since he had put it in his mouth with bravado, and lit it with that defiant flourish. He leant against the mantelpiece, feeling faint. Putting his hand to his face, he found it wet, and he realized that his body was quivering, and damp with cold sweat.

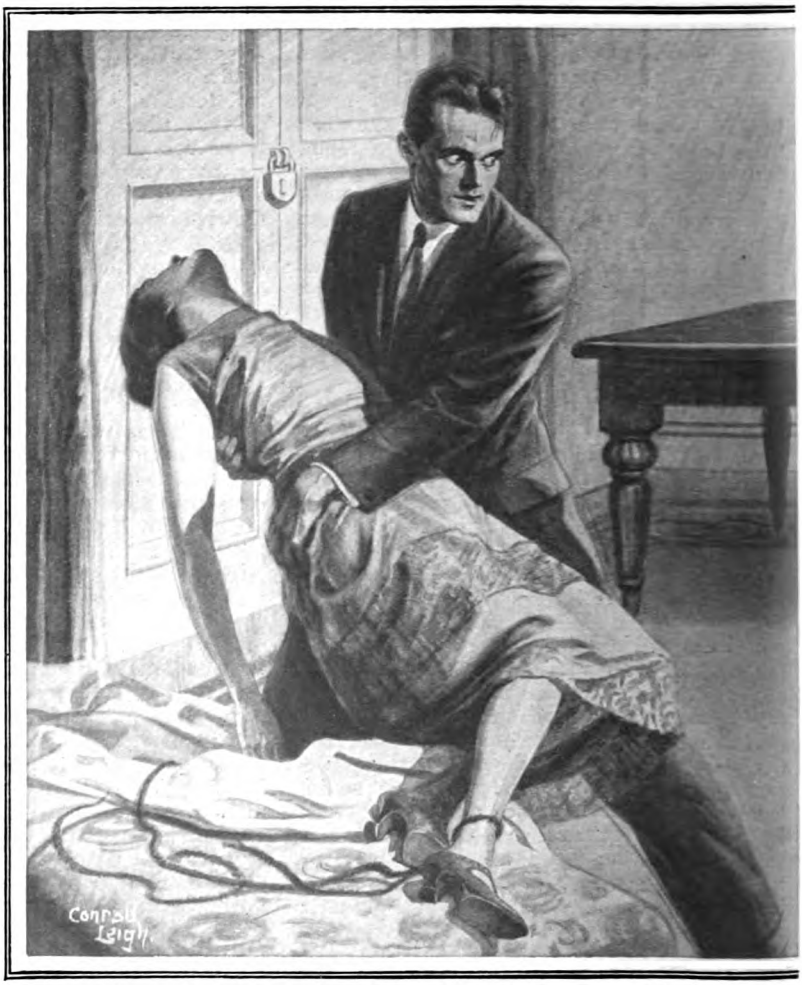
V.

MACANDREW was dimly conscious of a door opening. In front of him he saw the squat man and the man with the fair beard. He thought the fair man's face was puckered in a horrible smile, but he was not certain. At the moment he was not certain of anything, except that the snake was dead, and he had killed it.

The fair man was talking to him, but he did not listen.

"I've beat ye, ye swine," said MacAndrew slowly, his strength returning. "I've beat ye. And now I'm going to kill ye, as I've killed that——"

All his Celtic blood on fire, MacAndrew leapt on the man. Before he realized what he was doing, his fingers had dug into a soft throat, and the two went to the floor. MacAndrew's eyes were alight, and he cried out with inarticulate wrath, as his fingers bored their way into the puny throat within his hands.




MacAndrew stooped quickly and lifted the girl. Her head fell

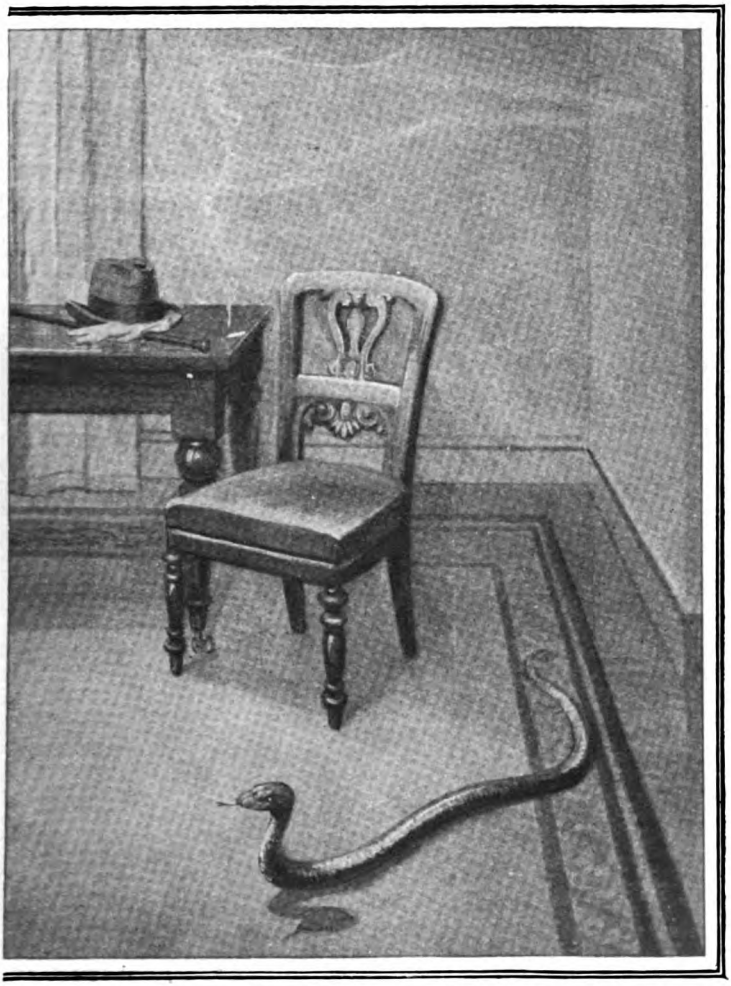
There was a scuffle in the rear. MacAndrew felt a blinding blow on the top of his head, and a chair toppled over him. Then his senses went spinning into a vast white haze. . . .

VI.

WHEN MacAndrew opened his eyes he saw people and shops flashing past, and he realized that he was in a motor-car. The squat man sat beside him.

"Feeling better?" said the squat man. "I must apologize. Perhaps I struck harder than I need have done, but I

really thought you had finished him. You should keep your temper better under control, young man. I must remind you that you agreed to our proposals of your own free will. And we kept to our bargain in every particular. In every particular."



limply back. The snake made its way slowly across the room.

"Liar," said MacAndrew, wearily; his head felt as if it were bursting, and he was in no fettle to argue.

"Not at all," said the squat man, politely. "We said we wanted a photograph of you, and we have got it. You have heard of Hugo Richter, who died a month ago? Perhaps not. All the same, he was a great actor. This afternoon you have taken his place. At the time of his death, one scene in his last motion picture remained unphotographed. For weeks we have been searching for a man who resembled him exactly; it is lucky that you came along. In that room three film cameras have captured every expression of your face, every emotion in your mind. We are realists, we Germans. Your horror was perfect——"

"Swine! swine!" said MacAndrew through his teeth. "The police——"

"Police? Poof! They would not listen. There are two witnesses to prove our bargain, and many more to prove that no harm could have come to you." The squat man laughed harshly. "It would have spoilt everything, would it not, if we had told you beforehand that it took one of the cleverest men in Berlin three weeks to make that marvellous piece of mechanism which you thought was a serpent? Go to the police, young man—go! It will but advertise the last great Richter film in Central Europe. And now good-bye. We thank you for your services. Your hotel is round the corner."

MacAndrew found himself bundled out on the pavement, his head still swimming confusedly. He was sitting in the hotel lounge when Dr. Hardman came briskly in with his group of students.

"Ah, MacAndrew!" said the little lecturer cheerfully. "You have missed a treat! How are you feeling now, MacAndrew?"

"Got an awful headache, sir," muttered MacAndrew, stifling a groan.

"Headache? Better lie down, MacAndrew. Better go upstairs and lie down!"

MacAndrew's reply to his professor is still spoken of with awe in a certain Scottish University Union.

"Lie down again?" he cried. "Lie down again in this confounded hotel? Lie down be damned!" And over the small round table he glowered at the professor.

# "WHAT SHALL I BE ?"
# The Choice of a Career

The object of these articles is to help boys and their parents to settle the question, "What shall I be?" Boys are often attracted by the external appearance of a profession and adopt it without any notion of its duties and requirements. Not seldom they are disappointed. The mental response to one's work is all-important, for unless one likes his job he is unlikely to excel, and he is certain to be unhappy in it. He can of course change, but too frequent changes are disturbing factors in achieving a career.

These contributions, written by men who have won distinction in their various callings, are selections from a book compiled by

J. A. R. CAIRNS

*(the well-known Metropolitan Magistrate),*

and dedicated to H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES. The book, published by Messrs. J. W. Arrowsmith (London), Ltd., will appear shortly.

## I.

# BUSINESS.

By

## ALFRED SALMON

*(Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of J. Lyons and Co., Ltd.).*

I HAVE been in business since I left school, and I left school very early. I was born into a business family and was surrounded from childhood by business people. This may have prejudiced me in favour of business, but it should at least qualify me to say something about the merits and conditions of such a career.

I cannot remember ever having desired to adopt any other career. Business has always interested me; it has given me all the excitement I needed, and sometimes more than was good for me. I know of no profession which could have given me more in those respects. And although some professions, such as that of doctor or surgeon, may appear more directly of service to the individual, it has to be remembered that the very life of a community, particularly of the present-day English community, depends on commerce, so that I think no one need be deterred from entering the business world by fear that he will not be serving his fellowmen. Nor do I think anyone should hide from himself the plain fact that most people adopt either business or a profession in the first place as a way of earning a living. To be independent is in itself a laudable

ambition. To my mind it is not the least of the attractions of the commercial life that for a boy without either exceptional mental gifts or financial support who is prepared to work steadily and systematically it leads to a livelihood sufficient for independence more rapidly and certainly than any other career I know.

It is difficult to set about describing its attractions to the boy who has no knowledge of it, and who is, perhaps, surrounded by people who have never thought of any means of livelihood except the professions. Undoubtedly environment has a great influence in shaping a boy's desires, and he absorbs in his own family and at school the ideas of those about him. I believe it is only of late years that commerce has been looked upon as fit for any person with ambition to be thought or called a gentleman. In many cases the thoughts turn only to a business career as a last resort, much as in past days the younger sons of the landed gentry used to turn to the Church. Those who were not blessed with a superfluity of this world's goods our Public Schools and Universities have hitherto turned mainly into schoolmasters and clergymen, but I am assured that the Universities are now encouraging their young men to enter the ranks of business men. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, whereas until recently there has been a general idea that the whole desire of the business man was to buy cheap and sell dear, this is now a definitely old-fashioned notion, and the Universities have recognized it as such. By dwelling on this change a little, I can perhaps give some slight sketch of the situation which boys going into business will have to meet, and which they should keep at the back of their minds against the day when they may be called to take their share in management.

Mr. Alfred Salmon.

The life of the early trader, which seemed to be so full of romance and adventure, is no longer possible; we no longer leave the ancestral home with a shipload of beads and come back, after wonderful adventures amongst untutored savages, with shiploads of gold and precious stones, with which we can found another family of what our Labour friends describe as "the idle rich." The so-called savage has acquired a certain amount of knowledge, and nowadays, if you wish to trade with him, you find he has a very shrewd idea of the value of what he is trading. He knows how to ask a good price for his own wares, and he is not prepared to accept mere rubbish in exchange for them.

The working classes, who form by far the larger part of the purchasing community, are learning that the best is the cheapest; and the business man of to-day must be prepared, if he wishes to conduct a successful business, to sell a good article at a reasonable price and be satisfied with a modest return on his capital. There is no doubt still the type of trading called profiteering. But profiteering can only exist alongside ignorance, and the opportunities for those who are so minded are becoming rarer as our knowledge increases.

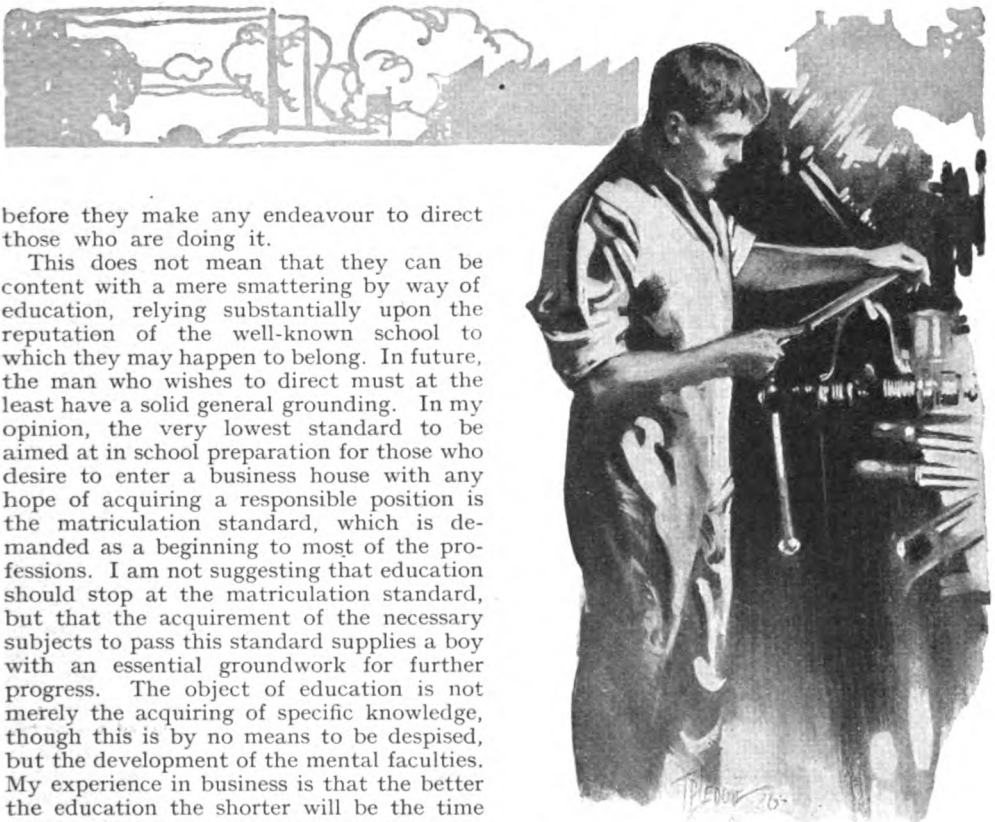
It is probably because of the spread of education that it is now being acknowledged that commerce may be an honourable career, and it is also being recognized that it requires something more than the mere trader's instinct to succeed under modern conditions. For example, it happens to be one of my duties to sit on the board of a great hospital. One day a person in the Casualty Department, suffering from some not very serious trouble, was ordered by the doctor a bottle of medicine, some liniment, and some ointment. They contained ingredients collected from all parts of the world. In the medicine there was quinine, which came from the cinchona trees growing on the Andes in South America, and there was an extract from poisonous seeds which were brought from India, and an infusion from a root brought from Bechuanaland. In the ointment were some mercury which had been brought from the Ural Mountains in Russia, some spermaceti from the sperm whale hauled off the coast of Greenland, and some lanolin from the wool of Australian sheep. In the lint were camphor brought from Japan, opium from Asia Minor, and olive oil from the shores of the Mediterranean. The patient paid a shilling for these, and it very nearly covered the cost. To have collected those things must have cost tens of thousands of pounds. Commerce had brought them within reach of that poor patient. And it is obvious that behind my list lies a vast

range of varied, interesting, useful, and efficient activity with little room for profiteering anywhere.

There lies what is sometimes called "the romance of modern commerce." But I think romance depends much more on our way of looking at things than on the things themselves. If you have an eye and ear for romance, no doubt you will find it in any occupation. If you are not imaginative in that way, I am the last person to say that in modern business, particularly in that part of it which falls to the lot of a young man, the element of romance is so obviously present as to force itself upon you. Business affairs tend nowadays to get more and more into the hands of large companies and corporations. The individual shopkeeper has been supplanted by the great stores; the merchant, who is the middleman collecting goods from the ends of the earth and supplying them to the distributor, is gradually being pushed out by the manufacturing concern, which acts as its own middleman, collecting the raw material and working it up into its final condition, and itself distributing. It is this last type of business that I have been occupied with. It is the only kind, therefore, of which I can speak. In such a house the interest of the work gains by added variety—it is, so to speak, to some extent internationalized. But, on the other hand, this added variety cannot be obvious to a boy starting at the bottom of one of the departments. It only shows itself as he gets round the departments and begins to see the business as a whole. And it is further marked by the fact that, on entering a business of this kind, as most people who go into business now must, the first task must be to master the detail of the trade in question—its technique. To do this properly usually involves a certain amount of sheer manual toil which is often not very romantic, I am afraid.

Perhaps those for whom this is written will not be interested in the mere manual labour attached to the conducting of a great business. They will have received something more than an elementary education, and if they are going into business will look for executive and administrative positions. But everything must have a beginning, and if they are to be of value in those positions they must know intimately the conditions under which the work is carried out. They ought, therefore, to go into the factory or workshop and learn something of the actual manual labour, or they will not have sufficient knowledge to enable them to control the staff which carries on the multifarious manual operations. They should learn by actual experience what has to be done

Nowadays the so-called savage has a very shrewd idea of the value of what he is trading.



They ought to go into the factory or workshop . . . . and learn by actual experience.

before they make any endeavour to direct those who are doing it.

This does not mean that they can be content with a mere smattering by way of education, relying substantially upon the reputation of the well-known school to which they may happen to belong. In future, the man who wishes to direct must at the least have a solid general grounding. In my opinion, the very lowest standard to be aimed at in school preparation for those who desire to enter a business house with any hope of acquiring a responsible position is the matriculation standard, which is demanded as a beginning to most of the professions. I am not suggesting that education should stop at the matriculation standard, but that the acquirement of the necessary subjects to pass this standard supplies a boy with an essential groundwork for further progress. The object of education is not merely the acquiring of specific knowledge, though this is by no means to be despised, but the development of the mental faculties. My experience in business is that the better the education the shorter will be the time which will have to be spent in the somewhat tedious task of acquiring what I have called the manual technique.

Do not worry about trying to specialize in so-called " commercial subjects " if you are going in for a commercial career. Schooling from this point of view is merely necessary mental athletics to provide for proper mental development. Special knowledge will be acquired in the business better than by any attempt to specialize at school. It will be more vital, up-to-date, and better adapted to the needs of the particular case than any academic training in " business subjects " possibly can be. In the beginning what a business management looks for is mental capacity, apart from actual knowledge. This does not seem to be specially assisted by any particular study. We have in my own company young men from the Universities who have specialized in History, in Mathematics, in Engineering, and in Economics, and each of them seems equally capable of taking up a business career with a reasonable prospect of success. Remember, on the other hand, that it is impossible to say that anything you learn at school or in college will be of no use to you, however remote it may appear from the activities of commerce. Most experienced business men could, I think, tell of occasions when what was apparently the most commercially worthless piece of information has been of real utility and value.

The question at what time to gain experience among the manual workers is one of real difficulty. It is difficult to decide whether this ought to follow immediately upon the schoolwork or whether it ought to be taken at a later period, because the youth who is going through this process may not carry to the work the necessary imagination to see what is its value. He is hardly likely at an early age to have sufficient psychological insight to get the best value out of it, but if he has had the experience even early in life, as he grows older he will be able to place it in its right perspective at a later date. A boy will usually be more elastic in adapting himself to circumstances than will a man, because he should not have formed the settled habits

of life which tend to form as we grow older, and which are often a difficulty in the way of a man's attempt to learn the routine of a factory at a comparatively mature age. The actual age at which this is done must largely depend upon whether a boy goes on to the University. But, in my view, it should always be undertaken as early as possible.

ANOTHER difficulty he will have to face at the outset of his career is that a large business house is a world in miniature, and that for the first time he will find himself among all types of men and women, some of whom will probably be temperamentally uncongenial to him. He will probably find, too, that the atmosphere of business is somewhat harsher than that to which he has been accustomed. There is, perhaps, more competition and less comradeship. On this topic I can do no better than quote a passage from Henry Ford's book, "My Life and Work," a book I commend heartily to everyone proposing to begin a business career, not because of the exceptional success of its author (I am here trying to deal with normal cases), but because I believe that success to have been built upon sound lines, ably and interestingly described in the book, a knowledge of which cannot fail to be of some assistance to every business man, both present and future.

Ford says: "I pity the poor fellow who is so soft and flabby that he must always have an atmosphere of 'good fellowship' around him before he can do his work. There are such men. And in the end, unless they obtain enough mental and moral hardness to lift them out of their soft reliance on 'feeling,' they are failures. Not only are they business failures; they are character failures also; it is as if their bones never attained a sufficient degree of hardness to enable them to stand on their own feet. There is altogether too much reliance on 'good feeling' in our business organizations. People have too great a fondness for working with the people they like. In the end it spoils a good many valuable qualities.

"Do not misunderstand me; when I use the term 'good feeling' I mean that habit of making one's personal likes and dislikes the sole standard of judgment. Suppose you do not like a man. Is that anything against him? It may be something against you. What have your likes or dislikes to do with the facts? Every man of common sense knows that there are men he dislikes who are really more capable than he is himself."

If a boy is intelligent and anxious to progress, when he gets into business he will take up special subjects for study with a view to acquiring particular technical information suitable to the special branch he finds himself in. As he acquires experience he will find it much easier to decide what suits his particular task, position, and opportunities than is possible while at school. If he leans to any particular branch he will soon, by means of the special knowledge so acquired, obtain the interest of his superiors and so get his foot on the ladder of progress. After a certain amount of technical training the young man will begin to learn something of the essential parts of managerial work from the standpoint of efficiency. Economy and efficiency are almost interchangeable terms, for that is not efficient in business which does not take into account economy. The expert manager must know something of accounts, and especially of costing systems. The details of the costing system are usually prepared by the statistical clerks in a large business, but the material for these statistics comes from the works, and the manager should know how to lay out his works and accounts so as to make the obtaining of statistics as easy as possible. Simplicity tends to accuracy. He must know how to utilize the statistics that are submitted to him, and understand the comparison of the various charts which the statistician will prepare. While he is acquiring this side of his mental equipment he will probably give indications of his powers of judgment, and so show whether he is fitted for administrative as well as executive work. This is a short general outline of progress. It cannot be elaborated in detail because the details will vary with every business, but in every business the general principles are the same.

Now this little sketch implies going through considerable drudgery in the early period of training and giving up a substantial amount of one's own time. So far, my experience is that the majority of young men seem incapable of submitting to this very necessary discipline. They are beginning to earn a little money and they seem anxious to spend it, and so much time has been spent in their schools on games that they are apt to consider games as the principal part of life. It is true that a certain amount of recreation is necessary to keep the body in health, and we all know that if the body be not kept in health the mind cannot work satisfactorily. But work must be given the first place, not recreation. When it is necessary to forego the recreation for a time in order that the work may be better done that sacrifice must be made, and the sooner that is recognized the better.

One of our first tests of a youngster's

capacity is what he does outside his business hours. If he gives up promptly at five or six o'clock and spends the rest of his time at games, generally we do not find that he goes very far. One of the few things a keen man is usually not keen about is the hour at which he gives up business. We like to know, too, that he does some work, apart from his daily occupation, towards equipping himself for a bigger berth. The drudgery must be done at one end of life; if it is not done in the early stages it will have to be done in the later, and the elderly drudge is a rather pitiable object. Our leisure and recreations must be made to accord with the exigencies of our business. It is useless to endeavour to get as much leisure as a friend may have if one's occupation does not permit of it. So many are restricted in the choice of an occupation because certain businesses interfere with certain recreations in which they are interested.

There are few careers which offer such advantages to the fairly well-educated as the hotel and catering business, and the modern tendency to spend more time away from home, helped largely by the facilities for travel, is making it daily more important; but it is rare that that class of lad will enter it at the bottom, because some of the work which can only be mastered by practice is uncongenial to the majority of people; thorough grounding in the detail usually involves roughing it abroad, and the hours of work are not so convenient for athletic sports as office and factory work. The result is that the most successful people in the higher branches of the business are generally foreigners, who are not so sport-ridden, and who have acquired, with their business, a knowledge of the people, methods, and languages of many nations.

I have read that no man has improved his position in business without sacrifice at some time or another. The lives of all who have succeeded must be a record of sacrifices, for their achievement is largely the result of putting aside the pleasure of the moment for the sake of the advantage that may accrue in the future.

From long years of experience I am convinced that the youngster who forms the opinion that a business in which he has started offers no scope—no future—is not likely to make much headway in commercial life, for in the majority of instances the trouble is that he lacks the insight to realize the possibilities before him. Not that I wish to convey the impression that every capable man has the temperament which will enable him to work happily in every sphere. I do wish, however, to emphasize that any youth who wishes to do well must take the blame largely to himself if he does not get as far as his inclinations would carry him.

One of the few things a keen man is usually not keen about is the hour at which he gives up business.

The mainspring of personal progress is ambition, but ambition alone may give rise only to discontent or envy. What is wanted to feed ambition is the power to observe the conditions in which the work engaged in is being carried on and may

be developed, and the closest study of every detail connected with it until one has complete mastery of it. Cultivate also the habit of dealing promptly with matters as they arise. The man who puts things off till to-morrow will find that the need for his action has probably gone by, or that someone else has supplanted him.

All these remarks are, I realize, very general, and may not assist very far those who find difficulty in choosing a business in which to find pleasant and profitable occupation. In the end the decision must always rest with the individual. The boy, or his parents, must decide whatever the suitable trade is to be. They should be capable of judging whether engineering, accountancy, banking, general trading, or manufacturing is likely to be most suitable. I have tried to indicate here, as I see them, the general conditions of success and the broad lines upon which a boy going into business will find his future widening out before him. There is, however, one other important topic which ought to be considered—his relations to others in the business world.

In business it is a good thing to form early the habit of making friends of those about you—the right friends, of course. "Birds of a feather flock together," and the intelligent, capable people generally foregather; a great deal will be derived from the association of keen minds. One can generally learn something from every acquaintance, even if it is only something to avoid, and if that habit alone can be cultivated some good will be done. Not that I think young people should imitate each other too closely. The man of character will generally disregard the details in others, though he will probably observe keenly enough what others have found to their advantage.

IF a boy really means to get on he can do no better than to let it be seen by his labour and the intelligence put into it that it is the good of the business and the interests of his employer that he has at heart. Wholehearted loyalty is not so common in the commercial world that it has ceased to be of value, high value, and it will be rare indeed that the reward does not come.

What employer worthy of the name exists who will not appreciate the man who is out to give the fullest value for his wage? Employers are in business to make their concerns profitable, and will always take the keenest interest in those most useful in the achievement of successful results. Here, to my mind, is to be found the peculiar advantage of business from the point of view of boys just starting life without financial backing. I believe no other career offers modest independence so swiftly and a reasonably assured position and prospect to the young man who will show the character and tenacity to pursue the kind of course I have indicated. Naturally, like everything else, the business life is not free from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." But it should be borne in mind that for the man who has really mastered his trade the particular employer is a secondary consideration. He will rarely, indeed, be without the opportunity of remunerative employment. But remember that a trade is not mastered in a day. Many a young man has abandoned business because he thought his employers did not pay sufficient attention to him, because he was not getting on fast enough, when a little more patience would have had its reward.

Let us listen to Henry Ford again. "It is not sensational brilliance," he says, "that one seeks in business, but sound substantial dependability. Big enterprises of necessity move slowly and cautiously. The young man with ambition ought to take a long look ahead, and leave an ample margin every time for things to happen."

Apart from this, one can only derive an interest in life itself by taking an absorbing interest in one's life work, not so much for the immediate cash reward (though that will come) as for the pleasure of acquiring the ability to overcome difficulties, foresee dangers, and take advantage of opportunities as they come within our grasp. A business career carried on in this spirit will afford endless interest and will ensure results equal to the abilities of the individual far more surely than can be achieved in a professional career.

In a business, however small or great, a great and human interest can be taken in the social and intellectual welfare of all those connected with the concern. Every large business nowadays recognizes the value of studying the health and happiness of its staff. In many cases this is carried out through the efforts and interests of the *employés* themselves, the employers extending a sympathetic hand towards the accomplishment of that social improvement which has become a necessary phase of commercial and industrial life.

There is an avenue for the energies of the best brains in the land to travel. Commerce and industry can be carried on with honour to the individual and with profit and prosperity to the community. In the process the wisest and best instincts of human nature can be fostered, the health of those connected with the concern studied and

improved, and the whole organization lifted to a high plane, enabling everyone to achieve the personal lasting satisfaction that comes from the knowledge that our occupation and our methods of following it may leave the world richer and better for our share in the guidance of its material social destinies.

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II.

# THE STAGE.

By

## J. M. GLOVER

(*Director of Music, Drury Lane Theatre*, 1893–1920).

IN discussing the Stage as a career one must attack the subject firmly and without fear.

I.

In the first place, let no man decide to be an actor unless acting, *per se*, appeals to him more than all else in the world. Acting is an art, and it demands a man's whole life; for it he must be prepared to give up all ideas of wealth, of domestic comforts, of all that other men regard as making life worth while. If a man whose heart is set upon music, or the sea, or acting itself, is forced by circumstances to adopt a business career, there is every chance that in time he will learn to fill his niche adequately, and even possibly with some distinction. But if the man who is born to be a business magnate, or a sailor, or an architect, or a doctor goes instead upon the stage—he will fail. And in his failure he will either throw up his career and turn, belatedly, to something else, or he will continue his days of failure, and suffer accordingly.

Mr. J. M. Glover.

II.

If, in spite of this warning, he determines that the Stage shall be his career—well, one is tempted to say, "God help him!" He is probably saying to himself: "I will be a successful actor. For umpteen years I will earn two hundred pounds a week. I will become famous. I will make a fortune. And eventually, with a well-earned knighthood, I will retire as a man who has succeeded in life."

And unless he is born under a star nearly as rare as the blue moon he will not be a successful actor, he will not earn two hundred pounds a week, he will not make a fortune, he will not earn a knighthood, and his only form of retirement will be in the long, long weeks and months when he describes himself as "resting."

Still—he may prove to be one of the lucky ones, winning for himself a place in the firmament and eventually becoming a star, or even a planet. But even then his position will be precarious. Temporary ruination may result for an actor from a sore throat, an attack of measles, or even from something still less within his own control, such as a death in the Royal Family. If a man in any other profession or business gets ill there is someone to "hold the fort" for him until he returns; but the prolonged absence of the star from a show means the end of that

production, and very likely a period of unemployment for the actor at the end of his convalescence. For an actor trades on his personality and his personal attractiveness; to give place to a poor understudy will kill the show, while to make room for a good understudy is, at the best, to lower one's value by the introduction of a competent rival.

III.

But, for the purposes of this article, we must assume that the tyro is prepared for the worst that can befall him. He is not seeking wealth, or the comfort of sitting by a fireside with his wife, or the enjoyments of society. He sees himself as an artiste, and for the sake of his art he would devote his life to the Stage. Very well, then.

Unfortunately for him, there is no royal road of entry into the career. Eton and Oxford, Harrow and Cambridge, are not much of a help to the stage aspirant. One thing above all else is wanted at the start, and that is experience. If our tyro is, or can be, a member of a good dramatic club, such as are attached to the Universities, by all means let him learn there all he can of his craft; yet it is remarkable how few of the members of these clubs do actually blossom out into the real thing, the professional actor. For there is a long, long gap between the dramatic club and the professional "boards," and it is not easy to bridge it. Influence, of course, is a help. If our young man has a friend whose wife knows the wife of a cousin of somebody who knows an actor-manager—well, it is up to him to shorten the circuit.

IV.

Then as to qualifications. Brains and intelligence are needed, and presumably some faint spark of this particular branch of what is called "genius." But two other things are also important: good looks and a tall presence. If an actor misses these two of the qualifications, he is restricted at once to a species of acting which is called "character," and the rest of the world of drama is barred to him for life. Success will then mean a reputation for character acting—for small man "funny" parts, for diminutive misers, solicitors, and other "type" impersonations—and his average income is unlikely to exceed about four hundred pounds a year. Once an actor makes a success in such a speciality he is virtually ruined, for no one will ever engage him for anything else. His very success will prejudice authors against him, because, like sheep, they will all say: "Jones, the actor, is very good in Pinero's play, but that is not what I want, for if I put him in mine the critics will say that I have copied one of Pinero's types." So Jones is condemned to repeat the one performance at which he made his original success. Having waited six months to get an engagement, he may make a success and play the character for three, four, or five hundred nights—only to become a human automaton, useful for only a single purpose. He then has a siesta of six or twelve months' idleness, being continually passed over, until at last he is drafted into another play where his size and personality fit in with the frame. So that in three years, working at an income of twenty pounds a week—a thousand a year—he finds that he really has only what is described as a "Village Blacksmith" engagement—week in, week out—resulting in his earning an average of six pounds a week—three hundred pounds a year. So much for Jones.

If, however, our actor is a tall, handsome man with a debonair, Romeo personality, he will at any rate have a wider field. He will have at the start to decide whether his ambition is to play the lead at Ticklem-on-the-Mud or to announce that "Dinner is served" in the West-end of London. If he chooses Ticklem-on-the-Mud he gives up for ever his chance of becoming a West-end star, and to play Bassanio at the Hull Repertory Theatre will be about the summit of his ambition; if he decides to stay in London he will usually be found on the pavement in the neighbourhood of Shaftesbury Avenue, but he will constantly feel that one day—one day—his name will be in the biggest letters on the play-bill.

V.

I have tried, in these words of advice, to disperse some, at least, of "the glare of the footlights." It is a tinsel glare. I have said more than once in this article that the life of the actor is incompatible with ordinary domestic life and comfort. That is a point which the aspirant must not forget. The only time when the average actor is not separated from his wife is when he is out of a job. Meanwhile, he has to make love every night to a *papier-mâché* wife in a play, and all the while he is living in third-rate lodgings that are a sordid combination of dirt, bad cooking, and general discomfort. Even when in time he comes to be a three-figure man and live in an hotel, he cannot afford a sitting-room, and he spends his spare time loafing from house to house, or from bar to bar. And all the time there is the lonely wife at home, children always saying: "Where's daddy,

mummy ? " Well, it isn't a pretty picture, is it ? Yet it is a true one, and, since domestic surroundings are among the bigger influences in a man's life, one must consider them in choosing a career.

VI.

Well, there it is. It may be that the Stage will become a less overcrowded profession through the writing of this article. At any rate, I hope that it will keep off some of those unfortunates who enter it without knowing what will lie before them. But if, in spite of it, our young aspirant says : " I don't care. The Stage is the life for me ; it is what I was born for, and it is what I shall give my life to "—well, here's luck to him. He'll need it !

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III.

# THE CHURCH.

By

## THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

IT is one of the most extraordinary and inexplicable facts of the present day that with so many professions, such as law, the medical profession, and engineering, absolutely crowded, so that it is difficult for men to get a living in them, the one profession which offers the most complete development of mind, body, and spirit should be starved for want of men.

Before I go into the possible explanations of this fact, I should like to emphasize my assertion with regard to the entrancing field which the ministry of the Church gives for every form of activity.

Let us take the lowest first. I was entertaining the two crews of Oxford and Cambridge on successive days before the boat race, which, alas ! for no fault of anyone's, was that year such a fiasco. It would have been impossible to see on two successive days a finer lot of young men, physically, but as far as I could make out in my conversation with one of the Presidents none of them was thinking of being ordained, unlike the long succession of famous old oars who have been ordained in the past.

The Bishop of London.

But knowing as I do so well the masses of young men and boys to be won to God in London alone, where athletic prowess is so great an asset in arranging Saturday games, and in winning preliminary confidence as a basis for higher things later, I confess I coveted that mass of young manhood to join in the great tug-of-war between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

For the first fifteen years of life in Holy Orders there is no profession in which a man can find more useful scope for all the athletic prowess he has developed at school and University than in the ministry of the Church. But I quite agree that it is only a beginning. " How long," I asked a well-known " blue " who was teaching in a boys' school, " does your athletic prestige help you ? " " About ten minutes," he replied. What he meant was that the boys soon found out whether he could teach or not, and what there was in him behind this reputation ; but still, even those ten minutes with boys are useful. The success or failure of every sermon to boys in a school chapel is decided in the first five minutes.

I do not mean for a moment to imply that the beefy athlete is necessarily going to be

a successful parish priest, so we must next turn our attention to the *mind*. I can honestly say that during my own forty years of ministry I have never had mentally a dull moment. Everything that one has time to read brings "grist to the mill." "You can do nothing against the Truth but for the Truth" is one of the most enlightening phrases in Holy Scripture. All your "Greats" reading, if you are lucky enough to have been made to read "Greats," lights up the brightness of "the Light of the World" compared with the preliminary rays of Truth on the surrounding darkness outside it.

All history leads up to the great Revelation, or dates from it. It is not a mere conventionality to talk of "B.C." and "A.D.," for as a matter of fact what you have to preach for the rest of your life is the dominating Fact of the world. You are literally all the time "on the crest of the wave"! I can remember, during the years between the age of twenty-three, when I left Oxford, and twenty-six, when I was ordained, imagining that I was going to be "the slave of a creed" for the rest of my life, "cribbed, cabined, and confined" in my outlook. I found, on the contrary, that I had climbed a glorious mountain from which I could survey all Truth, and that there is no realm of science, philosophy, or history which did not receive new light and illumination when viewed from the standpoint of revealed Truth.

You imagine that after the first two, or possibly three, sermons you will have said everything you could possibly think of about God and man, and yet here am I, and thousands of far better men, after forty years, preaching as keenly and vigorously what we believe to be the secret—and the only secret—of a better world here, and of a happy life here, with undiminished and ever-increasing joy and happiness. There must be something in the Gospel itself so to invigorate and even develop the mind.

But, naturally, the ministry of the Church has even more to do with the *soul*. Interesting as it is to the mind to deal, for instance, with all the questions such as have been asked me, week by week, during my Lenten Mission in Central London, it is still more interesting to try and help the troubles and distresses, hopes and fears, of human souls. The fact that one can scarcely ever speak of them to anyone else but God only makes them all the more vital and even tragic in their import. After all, man is a "praying animal"; he is "born to pray"; as the wing of the bird demands the air, and the fin of the fish demands the water, so the instinct of prayer demands God. It becomes, then, of enthralling interest to develop this instinct in one's self and others into what, after all, is the highest vocation possible to man: Communion with God Himself. "What is the chief end of man?" is a question in the Presbyterian Catechism, and it is followed by the noble answer: "To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." This, then, being the nature, scope, and happiness of the ministry of the Church (and notice I am avoiding that common misconception of talking of taking His orders as "going into the Church"), it is, indeed, surprising to find so few from the Public Schools and Universities entering it to-day.

NOW, there are many alleged causes:—

1. The most common one is the *financial* one, and no doubt we must admit at once that it is not a lucrative, and *ought* not to be a lucrative, profession. It ought not to be too lucrative, otherwise it might entice unfit men to enter it, but, on the other hand, the Church has made the greatest possible mistake in allowing its clergy to live in circumstances sometimes of absolute poverty. Things, however, are very different to-day, or, rather, are becoming very different. Every living in England with more than four thousand people, if in public patronage, has been raised to four hundred pounds a year; every living with one thousand people to three hundred and fifty pounds, and with three hundred people to three hundred pounds. Curates now can get two hundred and fifty pounds at once.

When paterfamilias wakes up to this change and asks himself in what other profession he is going to get his hopeful son off his hands at the age of twenty-three with two hundred and fifty pounds a year, he will, I believe, withdraw that quiet discouragement which many a good man, in what he considers the best interests of his son, has exercised during the last ten years.

There is still, however, a great deal to be done in this direction, but when an efficient Pension Scheme has been evolved and the new Dilapidations Act gets into working order, and Church people have realized that "the living hand" must pay far more than it does and not depend so much on the generosity of the past, I believe that the financial obstacle to men taking Orders will pass away.

2. But a more commonly alleged cause is the *decay of faith* among the young men of to-day, and we must thank God for the honesty of the young who steadily refuse to profess and believe anything they cannot honestly believe, and who say with sincerity that "Every man must be his own Columbus and find the Continent of Truth." Undoubtedly the war and all its consequences

have made men and women think to-day in a way they never have before. Is there really a Divine Person at the centre of all things on whose sympathy and power one can really rely?

I need not say that in a short essay it is impossible to argue such a question. I have devoted forty years to giving the reasons for the belief that there *is*, at which I eventually arrived, and it has been the special subject of the Mission for this year, which, with the questions and answers, is now published* under the title of "The Spirit of Jesus." For what it is worth it contains my answers to the questions, though better ones will be found in Mr. Studdert-Kennedy's "Wicket Gate" and "The Word and the Work."

3. But, frankly, is it honest doubt which keeps so many men back? I think it is the idea that *a parson's job is not a man's job.* It is the thought of the long black coat and white tie, and the thought that you are appearing to be better than you really are. I remember so well asking a rather smart-looking Oxford man, who subsequently did excellent work as a chaplain during the war, why he had hesitated so long to be ordained. "Well," he said, "you won't think me conceited if I tell you the real reason?" "No, indeed," I said. "Well, when I looked out of the window I saw a parson in the street, and I said to myself, '*I can't be like that man!*'"

But a little deeper experience of life shows that there are few more manly lives lived than by the clergy, who are always battling on bravely against what often seem overwhelming odds. And if life as a parson in England is too tame, we can always supply a man with a horse to gallop over the prairies in Australia and look after the lonely colonist, who is only too glad to see him; or send him to Africa to follow Livingstone, Harrington, and Weston, who laid down their lives in opening up Africa for Christ.

I was entertaining the crews of Oxford and Cambridge.

I would like any young man who reads these words to ask himself: *What am I going to sell my life for?* He only has this one life to sell. It is a poor thing to sell it for mere wealth, or even fame, and a wretched thing to sell it for mere ease and comfort; but if he wants to sell it for something which is lasting, which lasts into the other world as well as in this, let him go for human character; let him see how many he can win to a nobler life. Let him do a bit of work for God before he dies, and he will have in return, in far greater measure than he feels he deserves, the gratitude of human hearts and the undying loyalty of countless friends.

* By Wells, Gardner, and Co., Ltd., 3 and 4, Paternoster Buildings, E.C.4.

*Next month: "The Metropolitan Police," by the Commissioner of Police; "The Bar," by Sir Ernest E. Wild, K.C.; and "Banking," by A. E. E. Wood, M.A., of the Midland Bank.*

# An Eventful Day in the Life of Miss Faversham

By

## RICHMAL CROMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

MISS EGERIA FAVERSHAM was the daughter of a dean. He had been rather a thriftless and impecunious dean, and had died without making any provision for his only daughter. He had been fond of a good horse and a good table, and those pleasures are incompatible with large legacies to elderly spinster daughters. The reverend gentleman's own attitude to the question was that the girl should have married. Nor was Egeria herself resentful. She couldn't expect poor papa to save much money. Poor papa's income was so small and his needs so many. She had managed to economize greatly for poor papa in his lifetime by combining in her own person the offices of housekeeper, head-housemaid, and not infrequently cook. Poor papa, of course, must have his comforts. And as poor papa said to her on his death-bed, with his wonderful Christian optimism: "You'll be all right, Geria. There's no money, but you'll be all right. You can teach or marry or something."

That had been so wonderful of papa—so cheerful, so thoughtful for others even to the last. Egeria carried that sustaining memory of papa's last words: "You'll be all right, Geria," through life as a kind of amulet against disaster. And she had been very fortunate. She had not married, indeed, but she had taught. A well-to-do couple, Mr. and Mrs. Smyth-Bruce, who had once been papa's parishioners, had engaged her as governess to their children. It had not been easy work. They were high-spirited children, fond of all sports, and in particular of that sport known as "baiting Favvy." And "Favvy," though eager to impart knowledge, possessed herself only a very small amount of that commodity. Poor papa had considered education for women a waste of money. It could be spent so much more profitably to all concerned on horses and wines. But Miss Faversham did her best. She loved the children, and she was grateful to her employer, a domineering and rather vulgar woman who treated the cook and housemaids far better than she treated Miss Faversham. That, of course, was natural, because Miss Faversham could be so much more easily replaced. But Miss Faversham was grateful to her employer, as she had been to poor papa. Like poor papa, Mrs. Smyth-Bruce was "so kind."

Miss Faversham, of course, was not attractive. She was one of those women who look fifty before they are thirty—thin, lined, badly nourished, indescribably prim. She wore spectacles, did her thin grey hair in a tight bun at the back of her head, and wore clothes whose fashions seemed to belong to the last century. Probably they didn't. Any dress Miss Faversham wore would have looked old-fashioned. She was that sort of woman.

When she was fifty-five the youngest Smyth-Bruce had perfected such education as Miss Faversham could impart to her, and Miss Faversham's task in that household was over. She was presented with a large testimonial and a small cheque by Mrs. Smyth-Bruce, and went forth gallantly into the world again in search of work. But the world received her coldly. Mrs. Smyth-Bruce's testimonial explicitly stated that she was "hard-working, refined, and conscientious," but it seemed that the world had little need of such qualities. It fought shy of Miss Faversham. It fought shy of her age and her plainness and her old-fashioned appearance. It told her so quite bluntly. And at this stage Miss Faversham more than once quite failed to display that cheerfulness of spirit that papa had often said was a Christian's first duty (papa's own Christianity in this respect had reached a high standard), and wept silently and

bitterly in the cheap little bed-sitting-room with which Mrs. Smyth-Bruce's small cheque provided her. Then (it seemed as if poor papa must have been controlling her destinies beneficently from above—it made her feel so ashamed of her unchristian despondency) a wonderful thing happened. A brother of papa's died and left all his money to Miss Faversham—a wonderful amount of money—a thousand pounds. Miss Faversham bought with it an annuity of a hundred pounds. I daresay you say that it isn't possible to live on a hundred pounds a year. But it is. If you know how. Miss Faversham, in her shabby bed-sitting-room in the neighbourhood that Mrs. Smyth-Bruce would have called "slummy," living chiefly on tea and cheap bacon and bread and butter (she always called it "butter" by courtesy), and still wearing the clothes that she had bought as being "suitable" to her position as Mrs. Smyth-Bruce's governess, was very happy. She was vaguely and expansively grateful to God and poor papa's brother and Mrs. Smyth-Bruce, and for her good fortune. Of course, the other tenants were what Mrs. Smyth-Bruce would have called "not quite ——" —except Miss Rossiter. Miss Rossiter was a lady. She was a doctor's daughter. Like Miss Faversham, she had been a governess. She would come into Miss Faversham's room in the evening, where Miss Faversham sat doing crochet work (which she sold to a shop three streets away), take out her knitting (which she sold to a shop in her native town), and would say: "Well, dear, and how are you getting on?" and Miss Faversham would say in her prim manner: "Very well, thank you, dear—in my quiet, uneventful way."

MISS FAVERSHAM had just had her lunch. She called it lunch. Lunch sounded so much more refined than dinner, though "dinner" consisted only of cocoa and bread and butter. She had washed up and put away the things. Her room looked very clean and tidy. Upon the table was the little parcel of crochet work that she had finished the evening before. It was a bright spring day. The sun poured in through the window. It showed up the shabbiness of the little room—the threadbare carpet, the faded table-cloth, the chair whose springs were broken, the discoloured walls.

But Miss Faversham did not notice these things. She was so used to them. She noticed only the transforming brightness of the day, the indescribable sensation of spring in the air, the whiteness of the little clouds in the blue sky, the unusual soaring of her spirits. The first spring day often went to Miss Faversham's head. It made her want to do wild and impossible things, such as dance on the pavement and sing and buy flowers. Quite absurd things, all of them. But she thought she would go out for a little walk, and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air. There'd be no harm in that. She'd take the crochet work to the little shop in the next street but one——

She took her old-fashioned black straw hat from the cupboard and put it on before the little square cracked looking-glass that hung on the wall. A very careful observer might have noticed that she took longer than usual to put it on, and that the final result revealed more of her hair than was her custom. Although it was sunny, it was rather cold, so Miss Faversham slipped on her thin black coat, then she took up her little parcel and went down the street.

It was not a "refined" street. Not even the most highly rose-coloured spectacles would have seen it as a "refined" street. It consisted chiefly of shops (Miss Faversham's own bed-sitting-room was over a shop)—rather mean little shops, but quite respectable. There was Mr. Cripps, the baker, and Mr. Frame, the grocer, and Mr. Handley, the draper, and Mr. Haslop, who kept the second-hand shop at the corner. Mr. Haslop was a little, stooping man with a straggling grey beard and bald head, and dim eyes that peered through large old-fashioned spectacles. Miss Faversham approved of Mr. Haslop. She had had certain dealings with him. She had sold him (after great searchings of heart) a silver cigarette case and a gold watch that had been poor papa's. Mr. Haslop had been most respectful in his manner. She felt almost as if she were back again in poor papa's parish, being looked up to by the less-important inhabitants of papa's cathedral town.

Miss Faversham walked down the road in the bright sunshine. Had you been there you would have seen a thin, elderly, dowdy woman, walking very primly with a little mincing step. You wouldn't have known that in spirit she was dancing on the pavement and singing and buying flowers.

Mr. Haslop was standing in his doorway.

"Good afternoon, Miss Faversham," he said. His eyes peered at her through his big round spectacles. Miss Faversham lingered. It was such a beautiful day, and something respectful (was it—was it even admiring?) in his glance joined forces with the beautiful day and made her heart flutter. A faint colour came to her pale cheeks.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Haslop," she said.

He smiled.

"Are you—are you in a hurry, Miss Faversham?" he said. "I have something

in the shop that I think would perhaps interest you."

She hesitated. She ought, of course, to go straight on. She ought to say she was in a hurry. But—it was such a beautiful day. The flush deepened.

"No," she said, graciously. "I'm not in any hurry, Mr. Haslop. I'd very much like to see it."

SHE followed him into the dark shop with a feeling of excitement. It was quite an adventure—quite an adventure to go into this mysterious shop at the invitation of the old man—and such a nice old man. Some faint ghost of sex-instinct raised its head in Miss Faversham's dried-up heart—*such* a nice old man—and how nicely he'd spoken to her—almost as if he'd admired her. Again Miss Faversham's heart fluttered.

It was a very dark shop, dark and dusty and cobwebby and piled with what Miss Faversham would have classed as "rubbish"—great heaps of ornaments and bric-à-brac and small pieces of furniture and boxes, and even a heap of old clothes in one corner—a gloomy refuge of battered and despised household gods, a haunt of mystery. Yet here and there through the gloom came a gleam of something dully rich—the sparkle of jewels from a box on the counter, the sheen of brass and gold from a little table.

Mr. Haslop had taken up a piece of carved ivory.

"Now, what do you think of this?" he said. "Beautiful—eh?"

Miss Faversham looked at it. She was just going to agree when something else caught her eye—an exquisite old vase that stood in the darkest corner of the room.

"That's lovely," she said, looking at it. She moved nearer.

"It must be very valuable," she said.

"With its fellow it would be," said the old man. "If I get its fellow they'll be valuable."

"But how do you get all these beautiful things?" said Miss Faversham, impulsively.

The effect on the old man's face was that of a blind being drawn.

"Oh, they—come sometimes," he said, evasively, "sometimes they come."

Suddenly he moved through the gloom to a door beyond and opened it.

"I was just about to make a cup of tea," he said. "I should be honoured if you would join me."

Miss Faversham's heart more than fluttered. It leapt, it palpitated. The open door revealed a bright little kettle upon a bright little fire. She hesitated—then the spirit of adventure stole down upon her along a ray of spring sunshine through the grimy shop window. She deliberated and was lost; her faded eyes became almost bright. She said, breathlessly: "Oh, how kind—thank you *so* much!"

As soon as she said the words she regretted them. Have tea alone with a man unchaperoned! She'd never done such a thing in all her life before. But then she'd never been asked to do such a thing in all her life before.

She followed him into the little room and closed the door. Her heart was dancing a war dance in her thin breast. It was terrible. It wasn't respectable. What would papa have thought? Suppose papa was watching her now from above. What would he think? Oh, gracious! What *would* he think?

Mr. Haslop was pouring the water from the bright little kettle into an aluminium teapot. He had placed a chair for her at the table. She sat down mechanically, adjusting her shabby hat and straying wisps of hair with thin, trembling fingers. The old man went to a cupboard and brought out a tin of biscuits. He opened it, put a few on to a plate, and put the plate on to the table. Then from the same cupboard he brought out two cups.

And as he moved about the room Miss Faversham's agitation vanished. A great wave of pity for his male clumsiness and helplessness came over her. She seemed to lose her identity. She was Woman, mysterious, almost god-like—the genius of the home. He was Man—ineffably forlorn and helpless, a creature of pathos, as strong as a giant, as helpless as a new-born babe. To see him putting out the biscuits and setting the cups on the table sent an almost unbearable pang through her heart. She sipped her tea dreamily. She longed to comfort him in his mysterious male unhappiness, she longed to brush his clothes, to stitch on his buttons, to dust his room. The room was terrible. It couldn't have been touched for weeks. His biscuits were rather musty, but that only increased his mysterious pathos in her eyes.

A glint of sunlight came through the dusty window on to the aluminium teapot. The little room looked cheerful, almost gay. Miss Faversham's shyness and trepidation had vanished. She was actually enjoying it. It was thrillingly mysterious, thrillingly improper. The neglected little room was athrob with romance. Miss Faversham looked across at her host. In her faded eyes was a faint glimpse of sexual provocativeness.

"How do you manage about your housework, Mr. Haslop?" she asked.

It was inevitable that she should want

"Are you—are you in a hurry, Miss Faversham?" he said. "I have something in the shop that I think would perhaps interest you."

to know that. Any woman would have wanted to know that. Nothing appeals to a woman, nothing challenges every spark of sex instinct in her as much as this spectacle of a man living on his own—incredibly, impudently, pathetically independent of her.

"Oh, a woman comes in once or twice a week," said Mr. Haslop. "For the rest—I manage. Pray let me give you some more tea, Miss Faversham."

"Your work must be very interesting, Mr. Haslop," she said, almost coyly. Again the veiled look in his eyes behind their great barriers of streaky glass.

"So-so, Miss Faversham. So-so. Only so-so."

"You seem to get such beautiful things."

He shot her a quick glance.

"Not often—and they're not easy to dispose of, you know, Miss Faversham, not at all, not at all. People round here can't afford to give their value. It's not an easy life. No, no; not an easy life at all."

"No life's easy, I suppose," said Miss Faversham, sententiously, in her best dean's daughter manner.

Somehow that brought back to her the enormity, the terrible impropriety of the whole proceeding. She rose hastily.

"I—I really must go now," she said in a manner that was half simpering and half frightened. "Thank you so much, Mr. Haslop. It was *most* refreshing and *so* kind of you to ask me. No, please don't trouble. I can see myself out—yes, indeed—thank you *so* much."

She fluttered deprecatingly into the dark little shop and then into the sunny street, murmuring incoherent thanks and farewells. In the street she walked quickly away in sudden panic. Suppose some of the neighbours had seen—what would they think?—what would they say? She'd have no character left. And beneath her panic at the thought was a little thrill of excitement.

At the end of the street she stood still to collect her self-possession. What had she come out for in the first instance? Oh, to take her crochet work to Mrs. Blake. She still held the little packet under her arm. She hastened down the street again, passing Mr. Haslop's shop with a beating heart and averted head. A gust of wind at the corner nearly knocked her down. As she went she was re-living the moment when she had sat there in that bright, dusty little back room having tea with Mr. Haslop. It had been most improper, but—he'd asked her, he must have noticed her often, he must have liked her, he must have wanted her. Her cheeks flushed, her dim eyes brightened at the thought. No man had ever wanted her—even to share a cup of tea with him—before.

Yes, Mrs. Blake was very nice—paid her a shilling each for the d'oyleys as usual. Mrs. Blake was respectful in her manner, too, although Miss Faversham was selling crochet work to her. She knew all about Miss Faversham's being a dean's daughter, and she thought a lot of deans. The interview sent Miss Faversham into the street feeling once more calm and respectable.

The only unfortunate thing was that the result was of such short duration. When Miss Faversham reached her bed-sitting-room, she felt as "unsettled" (that was the word she used to herself) as ever. It was, of course, all the fault of that bright spring sunshine that had first given Miss Faversham the longing to run and dance and sing and buy flowers. It still flooded the little bed-sitting-room. Of course she ought to begin another set of crochet work, but—well, she didn't want to. And that was unusual for Miss Faversham. Usually Miss Faversham did her duty with no regard for her own wishes. But again—it was that mocking spring sunshine that was to blame for it all.

She went to the cracked square of looking-glass and straightened the wisps of grey hair that the wind had blown about her thin, precise little face. She made an effort to obey the call of conscience and sat down with a ball of cotton and her crochet hook. But it was no use. She was back again at once in that little room behind the dark shop. She couldn't do anything but re-live those moments. She couldn't think of anything but that. She fluttered helplessly at the memory. She felt shocked and coy by turns—but always excited. What would he be doing now? She knew quite well. She'd often seen him as she passed the shop in the afternoon. He'd be asleep in the arm-chair at the back of the shop. He always slept there most of the afternoon. Then the daring idea came to her. She'd do it. She'd slip past him into the back room and dust it for him, and slip out again before he woke. Then—he'd wonder who'd been there—perhaps he'd guess. She put on her coat and hat again and slipped a duster into her pocket. It was quite a new duster that Miss Faversham had not yet marked. As a rule she never used her dusters before she had marked them, but it was rather a dainty little duster; it struck Miss Faversham as looking "feminine," so she chose it instead of one of the marked ones.

Then, without giving herself time to think over what she was going to do, she went down to the street. The sunshine was

brighter than ever. It applauded her idea gaily, it laughed with her in bright friendliness, it filled her with vague longings for adventure and romance.

She went more slowly as she neared the shop. She stood for a moment as though looking in at the window, glancing surreptitiously up and down the street. No one was about. She could see Mr. Haslop asleep in the arm-chair in the darkest part of the shop. The shop door was ajar. The sunshine urged her in, almost pushed her through the door that opened silently and invitingly as soon as she laid her fingers on it. She entered and stood still for a minute, looking around her with beating heart. The shop was very dim and very quiet, but a thousand bright little eyes seemed to watch her inquiringly from the dark shelves and tables. She looked at Mr. Haslop. He was sunk in his chair, breathing softly. As she looked at him the thought of the mysterious helplessness and pathos of his sex surged over her afresh.

SHE slipped into the back room and began to dust. At once she regretted it. It was full of sunshine, but the sunshine here seemed less sympathetic, less fraught with romance and adventure than it had done in the street. She wanted to run away. But she wouldn't. She'd do it very quickly, now she'd come. She wouldn't be long. She dusted the little sideboard with quick, nervous movements, then stopped, her hand still holding the duster poised in mid-air, her eyes full of horror. There came the sound of movement and talking from the shop. Mr. Haslop and another man—they were coming through the shop towards the door. Miss Faversham was for a moment literally paralysed; then she fled, fled without thought or design, in sheer panic terror, through a farther door into—heavens! a man's bedroom. She was in a man's bedroom. It was only by a great effort of will that Miss Faversham prevented herself from fainting then and there. She'd no time to faint. The voices did not stop in the little sitting-room. They advanced towards the bedroom door. Miss Faversham gazed desperately around. She thought of hurling herself dramatically out of the window—anything, anything rather than be discovered in a man's bedroom—she, Miss Egeria Faversham, the dean's daughter. The whole thing was like a horrible nightmare. There was a curtained recess of the little bedroom where hung Mr. Haslop's clothes, and into this Miss Faversham darted, just as the door opened. She stood there behind the curtain quivering and moistening her dry lips. Two men entered—Mr. Haslop and another younger man, short, thick-set, thick-lipped. Mr. Haslop locked the door. "We'll be safer in here," he muttered as he did so. They sat down on two chairs at a small table by the door. At first Miss Faversham was too horrified to listen to what they were saying. She was not only in a man's bedroom, but in a man's wardrobe among a man's coats and trousers. The impropriety, the unmaidenliness of it! Never, never, never would she be able to hold up her head again. What would papa say if he knew? What would the Bishop say, the dear Bishop who sometimes visited papa and preached such beautiful sermons and was such a good judge of wine? Or—and this was far more to the point—what would Miss Faversham herself say if she were discovered? Waves of successive heat and cold chased each other up and down Miss Faversham's person at the thought. She put her duster to her lips to steady herself, then was terrified at the sound this made.

But the two men were absorbed in their conversation. Gradually Miss Faversham grew calmer in her unmaidenly retreat and peeped curiously through a little rent in the curtain that was in the neighbourhood of her eye.

Upon the table at which they sat was a vase exactly like the one Miss Faversham had admired in the shop that afternoon.

"Well, it's the one yer wanted, i'n't?" the younger man was saying hoarsely.

"Exactly, exactly," said Mr. Haslop. "How did you manage it?"

"Just 'appened," said the other, "jus' 'appened to see it—the big brown 'ouse beyond the green—I was on a job near there an' I see it through the winder and——"

"What else have you got?" said Mr. Haslop.

The other man opened a bag at his feet.

"Valu'bles," he said; "antique silver—fetch a lot—an' miniatures—old 'uns—fetch a lot, too; and see here, old cock, you can choke up a bit more'n you did lars' time. It's me runs the risk, not you, mind——"

"No, no," said the old man, whimpering; "it's very dangerous trying to sell them—very dangerous indeed. You don't understand how dangerous. And so near where you do your—jobs. I have to let things go for quarter their value——"

"Don't tell *me*," said the other with a growl. "I know yer—yer plants 'em off with another fence across London, yer does, an' yer gets yer money's worth an' covers up yer tracks. Wily ole bird. I knows yer. Yer've gotter give me

**Miss Faversham peeped curiously at the two men through a little rent in the curtain.**

more'n yer gave me lars' time, I tells yer."

"But I can't, I can't," quavered the old man. "You don't understand——"

"I understan' all right. You're a damned miser, that's what you are. Yer *made* of money. Wot's ter stop me bashin' yer over the head an' takin' what I want, eh? Where d'yer keep yer money? That's all I wanter know, ye old miser."

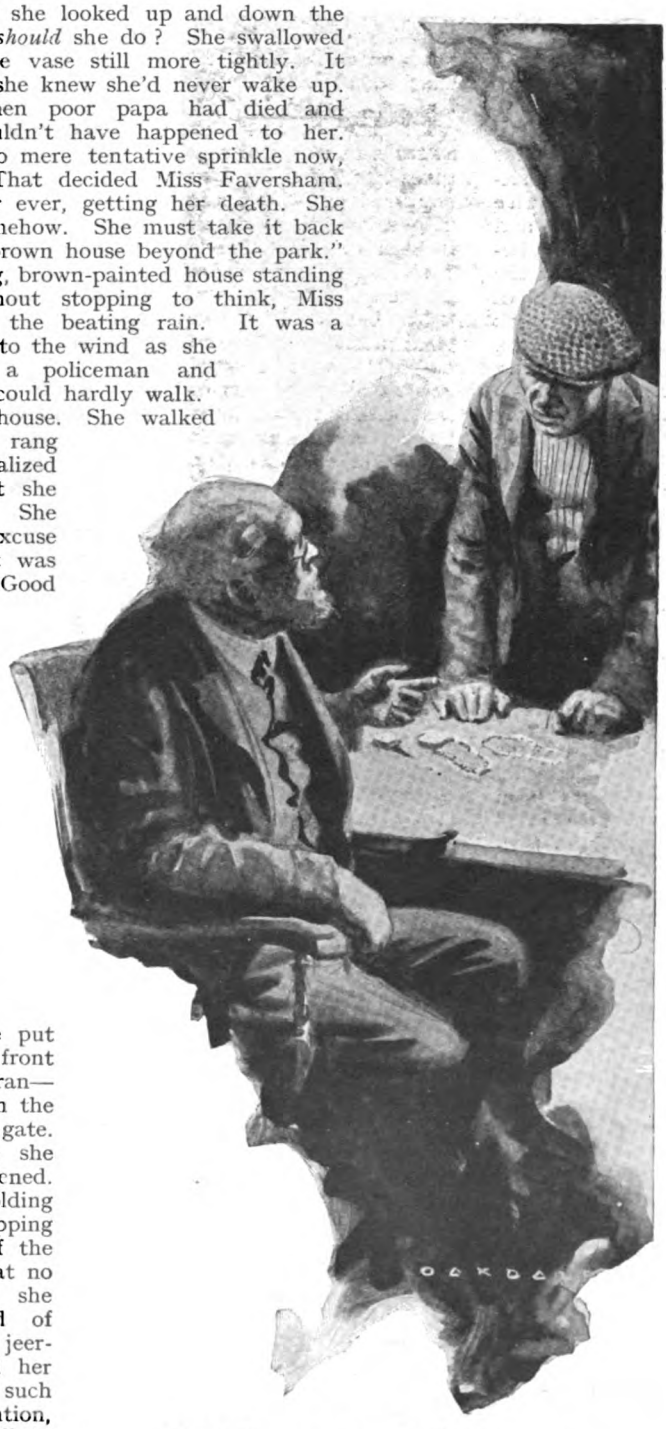
"Now don't get violent. Please don't get violent," said the old man. "I'm a very poor old man. I can only just manage to get along. I pay you more than I can afford for the things you bring me. It's all very dangerous—very dangerous, very dangerous indeed. I take all the risk. I—but bring your bag into the room behind the shop and I'll pay you as much as I can afford to—oh, yes, I'll pay as much as I can afford."

They went out, the younger man grumbling threateningly. The vase still stood on the little table. Miss Faversham stood behind the curtain, panting. She was horrified. She had entirely forgotten the impropriety of her position. This nice old man wasn't a nice old man. He was a criminal. She'd sat having tea with him, she'd hidden among his coats and trousers, and he was a criminal—a receiver of stolen property. She must get away at once—at once. She was horrified. He was worse than a thief. Miss Faversham felt a wave of righteous indignation surge over her. He'd *stolen* the vase. He mustn't keep it. Just as in the old days she had confiscated the tops with which naughty little boys played in Sunday-school, so she instinctively caught up the vase from the table as she passed it on her hurried flight to the door. It wasn't his and he mustn't have it. At the door she paused. The shop was empty. Voices came from the little inner room at the very back of the shop—the young man's voice angry and threatening, the old man's smooth and deprecating. With a shudder, still clasping the vase, Miss Faversham slipped through the dim shop and out into the street. She must get away as quickly as possible. She hastened down the street, and into the street that went off at right angles from it. She must get out of sight of that dreadful place. Then she stood still for a minute to gain breath and consider the situation.

The spring day had been as treacherous as spring days often are. It was now cold, dark, and beginning to rain. The sun which had lured Miss Faversham upon her path of spring madness now deserted her, left her standing at the corner of the street, her hair blown wildly about her, her hat on one side, her prim face full of bewilderment and horror, clasping to her breast the stolen vase. She became suddenly horribly conscious that she was holding the stolen vase. She didn't know what to do with it. She didn't know why she'd taken it. She daren't take it back to the shop. She daren't take it home. She daren't take it to the police-station. She felt that any minute a policeman might appear and take her to prison—her, Egeria Faversham, the dean's daughter, the preceptress of the little

Smyth-Bruces. Distractedly she looked up and down the dark, empty street. What *should* she do? She swallowed and blinked and clasped the vase still more tightly. It was like a nightmare—only she knew she'd never wake up. She wished she'd died when poor papa had died and then this terrible thing wouldn't have happened to her. The rain began to fall in no mere tentative sprinkle now, but in a real downpour. That decided Miss Faversham. She couldn't stand there for ever, getting her death. She must get rid of the thing somehow. She must take it back where it belonged. "The brown house beyond the park." Of course she knew it—a big, brown-painted house standing in a small garden. Without stopping to think, Miss Faversham set off through the beating rain. It was a long way. She bent down to the wind as she went. Once she passed a policeman and trembled so much that she could hardly walk.

At last she came to the house. She walked up to the front door and rang the bell. And then she realized that she had no idea what she was going to do or say. She turned hot and cold. "Excuse me, is this the vase that was stolen from your house?" "Good evening. I've brought back your stolen vase." No—it sounded dreadful. They'd simply detain her and send for the police. She'd never be able to prove that she hadn't taken it. They'd put her in prison. She'd never live it down. What *would* they think of her—Miss Rossiter, the Smyth-Bruces, the Bishop, dear papa's spirit? Footsteps were coming towards the door. The perspiration stood out on Miss Faversham's face. With a sudden quick movement she put down the vase on the mat in front of the door and turned and ran—ran with all her might down the darkening drive to the gate. When she was at the gate she heard the front door being opened. She ran down the road, holding up her skirt, her hat flapping over one ear. At the end of the road the silence told her that no one was pursuing her and she slowed down. At the end of the next road the delighted jeering of a street urchin told her that her appearance was such as to attract public attention, and she leant against a wall to gather up her straying wisps of hair, adjust her hat, and take breath.



"What's ter stop me bashin' yer over the head, ye old miser, an' takin' what I want, eh?"

Ten minutes later she entered her bed-sitting-room.

Twenty minutes later she was sitting by the fire, prim and tidy, just beginning on the next set of crochet work for Mrs. Blake.

And just then Miss Rossiter entered, carrying her little bag of knitting.

"May I come in, dear?" she said. "Have you heard of the terrible tragedy at the little shop at the corner—Mr. Haslop's?"

"N-no," gasped Miss Faversham.

"He's been murdered," said Miss Rossiter, as she sat down comfortably in the chair by the window. "They don't know by whom. He was found murdered about half an hour ago. I was passing at the time and stopped. The woman who used to char for him was there. She'd just found a sort of duster in the shop that she said wasn't one of hers"—Miss Faversham gasped—"but the police didn't seem to attach any importance to it as a clue——" Miss Faversham gulped. Heavens! Suppose she'd taken one of the marked ones! "The object was robbery. The secret safe that he evidently kept under a board in the floor was broken into and empty—— You look a little pale, dear."

She put the vase on the mat in front of the door and turned and ran.

Miss Faversham recovered her self-possession with an effort.

"Only the spring, I think," she said, faintly. "These early spring days are rather trying, are they not?"

"And how have *you* been getting on to-day?" said Miss Rossiter, playfully, taking her knitting out of her little bag.

Miss Faversham looked back over her day. She saw a series of pictures—herself taking tea in Mr. Haslop's sitting-room, herself hiding among Mr. Haslop's coats and trousers, herself standing in the rain clutching a stolen vase, herself running down an empty street—and she dismissed them as incredible. Things like that simply couldn't have happened to her. She must have dreamed them or read about them. They couldn't really have happened. She took up her crochet work again.

"Oh, very well, dear," she answered, still rather faintly, "very well—in my own quiet, uneventful way."

# RESTING

By

# BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY
D. L. GHILCHIK

IN the lounge of the Royal Hotel, Helmstone-on-Sea, a very small man reclined in a very large chair. There were newspapers on a table by his side, and there were certain parts of newspapers which interested him profoundly, but he was not reading them. He was smoking a cigarette and talking to Mr. John Mountshire.

The Royal Hotel was not by any means the largest hotel at Helmstone. It was much the dearest, and its cuisine and cellar were far beyond anything that the other hotels could boast. It was quiet and very comfortable, and it was admitted that Mountshire managed it admirably. No detail was too small for his attention. For instance, the notes with which you paid your bill might be dirty, but any note that the hotel paid to you was absolutely new. If the charges were high, there were at any rate no irritating little extras. The staff was adequate, respectful, and well-mannered. The place attracted the best class of visitors. Mountshire was not only the hard-working resident manager; he was also one of the small syndicate who owned the place. He was a man in the early forties, rather good-looking, but less English in appearance than his name might have led you to expect. He was fluent in three languages, and spoke English much better than French; but he spoke German even better than English.

"No, Mr. Perth," he was saying to the little man, "we never found the thief. The theft might have taken place days before it was discovered, and it was easy to dispose of those bonds. The rooms and clothes of every one of the staff were examined by the police. Mine also. I myself demanded it and set the example. But the staff here is very carefully chosen—it was not one of them."

"Who else could it have been?"

"It might have been a visitor."

"Quite so," said the little man, laughing. "I'm a thief myself."

Mr. Mountshire gave the indulgent smile with which he always received the jest of an esteemed customer.

"No, Mr. Perth, but you know how it is. We cannot ask visitors for references. And thieves of that kind may be very well-dressed, with nice manners and good education. I do not say a resident visitor. Unfortunately, as I think, the restaurant of the hotel is open to non-residents for luncheon and dinner. Anybody can come in. It is a busy time. My eyes cannot be everywhere. Nothing ever so much angered me as that theft did."

"Why? You didn't lose anything by it."

"It does no good to the hotel. And what more can I do than I have done? On every floor of this hotel and in every bedroom there is a notice in three languages imploring the visitor to hand in his valuables at my office and to take a receipt for them, and saying that otherwise the hotel cannot be responsible for the loss. Then comes this careless American, with valuable securities in a satchel which he keeps in a suit-case in his room. True, the satchel and case are locked—but two rips with a good knife and the thing is done. How can I save such a one? It is to break the heart."

But at this moment a shy French lady's-maid in black approached.

"You are Meester Mountshire, I t'ink? My lady say I give you."

Mountshire tore open the note which was handed to him.

"Tell her ladyship that I will wait on her with the necklace at once."

The girl went away, and Mountshire turned to the little man again.

Copyright, 1926, by Barry Pain.

"Lady Favor, who, as you know, of course, has a suite on the first floor, deposited her pearls with me and took a receipt. She wants to wear them to-night and asks me to give them to her maid. That's all right, but she doesn't send back my receipt. She'll give it when I ask for it, but—oh, if people would be a little more business-like!"

The little man smiled sympathetically and picked up a newspaper. Screened by the newspaper, his habitual expression of sunny cheerfulness vanished. He was thinking hard.

A year before he had read with interest the newspaper account of the robbery from an American staying at the Royal Hotel, Helmstone, of easily negotiable paper to the value of fifteen hundred pounds. The newspapers had noted with approval the request of the manager that the rooms, boxes, and persons of the whole staff should be examined, beginning with his own.

To Mr. Perth—to give him the name which he was using at present—the manager's action was suspicious. Mountshire was an able hotel-manager and no fool. Why, then, should he do a thing which was unnecessary and futile? It was unnecessary because the police would do any searching which they thought desirable without being requested. It was futile because the theft might have been committed some time before it was discovered, and it takes but a few minutes to put documents into an envelope and drop them into the post.

Why did he do it? Well, if the search were made and nothing were found, that might help to restore confidence in an hotel of which Mountshire was not only manager but part-proprietor. But how could Mountshire know that nothing would be found? He could only know it if he himself, or somebody acting for him, had already disposed of the contents of the satchel. Hotel-managers have good opportunities.

It was merely theory. But it seemed worth while to make a few inquiries in the guise of somebody wishing to purchase an interest in the hotel. These negotiations (in which of course Mr. Perth never appeared) came to an early end, for nobody in the syndicate was willing to sell. But Perth had found out that Mountshire was a naturalized German-Swiss, who had legally assumed that name on naturalization, and also that he was much the largest holder in the syndicate.

Other things occurred to occupy Mr. Perth's attention closely for some months—certain operations which were distinctly profitable. But in the next summer he thought he would take a few weeks' holiday at the Royal Hotel. It would at any rate be recreation: it might involve business. He had already made some friends among the residents at the hotel. His diminutive stature seemed to inspire a sort of protective affection in the women, while the fact that he was always bright and happy made him popular with the men. Lady Favor, who was fond of bridge and an execrable player, had already included him in the little parties that she sometimes gave in her suite on the first floor.

But at present, half-hidden behind his newspaper, Mr. Perth was thinking of business rather than of pleasure. He had, as we have seen, spoken of the theft of the bonds with Mr. Mountshire, and he did not think that the way in which Mr. Mountshire had talked was evidence of his innocence. He had protested a little too much. He had been too eager to point out that the theft must have been committed by a visitor. He had talked too readily and at too much length. Perth fancied that an innocent hotel manager, reminded of a year-old incident which was not creditable to the hotel, would have got away from the subject as soon as politeness permitted.

That Mountshire was habitually dishonest Perth did not believe. On the contrary, he felt certain that any valuables deposited at the office would be forthcoming again as soon as you presented your receipt for them. But he considered that Mountshire had yielded on one occasion to the temptation of an easy opportunity, and there was always the possibility that it might happen again. If it did, Mr. Perth considered that it would be of interest and might also be profitable.

MR. PERTH went up to dress for dinner. When he came down again the lounge was filled with men and women taking the *apéritif*. Perth joined two men who had hailed him, and ordered Martinis.

And then down the central aisle of the lounge came Lady Favor. She was middle-aged, rather fat, very good-humoured, and radiant. The French maid followed behind her to tuck her into the Rolls-Royce. Lady Favor waved her fat hand to Mr. Perth.

"All dressed up, ain't we?" said Perth to one of the other men. "Wonder where she's off to?"

"There's no end of a jamboree going on at the Grand to-night. She knows people there. I should think that might be it."

"Very likely," said Perth. "Let's go and get something to eat."

At table Perth began to talk about the amount of organization that went to the making of a modern hotel.

"We sit here stuffing soup and things into ourselves, but we never think what a

deuce of a lot of trouble is taken to bring one thing after another to us at the right moment. Here the kitchens are on the same floor, and that makes things easier. But if you notice you'll see that nothing that has been used goes back into the kitchen again. It all goes behind that screen. There a man and a boy are kept busy piling it up as fast as they can into a service-lift —sort of cupboard arrangement. Down it goes into the basement, where they have the washing machines. Up comes the lift again and takes a fresh lot. It's going on as hard as it can all the time we're at dinner. And yet you never hear a sound of it. Then the same lift goes up to the first floor. When Lady Favor gives a little luncheon-party in her rooms it takes up the lunch."

"How the dickens do you know these things?"

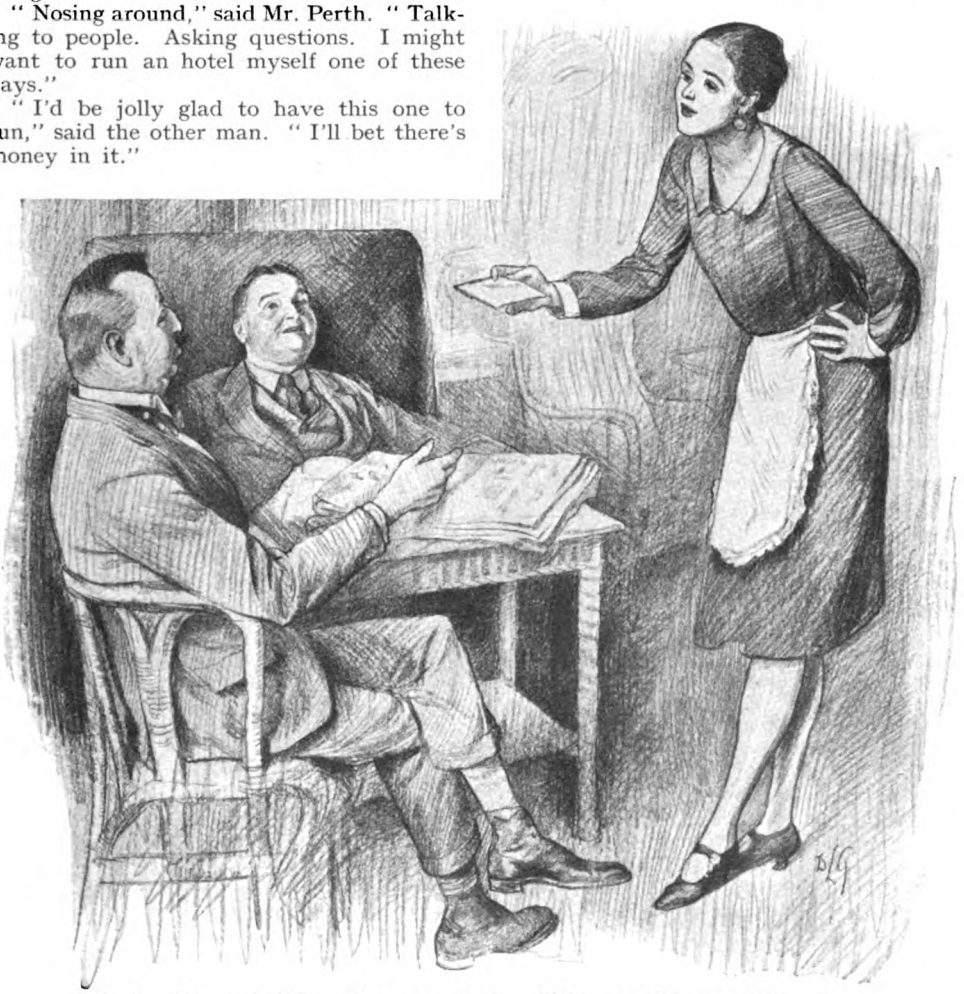
"Nosing around," said Mr. Perth. "Talking to people. Asking questions. I might want to run an hotel myself one of these days."

"I'd be jolly glad to have this one to run," said the other man. "I'll bet there's money in it."

"Judging from my last week's bill," said Perth, "there must be."

But the little man was thinking even while he chattered. Lady Favor would be home late that night, too late to return the pearl necklace to the office. She was good-natured and careless. You cannot be good-natured if you are very careful. The chances were that she would forget to hand in the necklace on the following day. It would lie there in her room. Possibly if Mr. Mountshire were an absolutely honest man he would remind her of it and put the necklace away again in the hotel safe.

But if he were not an entirely honest man? If he found the opportunity too tempting? Well, if it were a fine day practically everybody in the hotel would be out in the afternoon, Lady Favor among them. There



A shy French lady's-maid approached. "You are Meester Mountshire, I t'ink? My lady say I give you."

would probably be nobody in the lounge between the hour of the after-luncheon coffee and the beginning of afternoon tea. Mr. Mountshire would only have to stroll upstairs to the first floor with his master-key in his pocket, to take the necklace, to descend again, and to send it off by post to a safe address on the earliest opportunity.

Yes, that was a possibility. It was no more than that. It might never happen. But if it did happen how was Mr. Perth to checkmate it? That was a question to which he gave a good deal of serious thought.

On the following afternoon, which was bright and warm, Mr. Perth lingered on in the lounge after everybody else had gone out. He had a newspaper on his knee, but the exertion of reading it had apparently been too much for him. His head nodded forwards. He appeared to be asleep.

Mr. Mountshire came out into the lounge from his private office. He looked all round it and noted the recumbent figure of little Mr. Perth. He stood beside him for a moment watching him closely, and then proceeded slowly up the main staircase.

When he reached the first-floor landing his action accelerated considerably. Two minutes later he descended into the lounge, again surveyed the sleeping figure, and passed on into his private room.

And Mr. Perth sat up, listening, alert.

When Mr. Mountshire, with his hat on, came out of his private office to the front door he found Mr. Perth lounging there.

"Going out for a little exercise?" said Mr. Perth, wearily.

"Yes," said Mr. Mountshire. "I'm taking just a quarter of an hour off."

"Then you won't want to carry this with you, will you?"

Mr. Perth made a sudden dive for Mr. Mountshire's coat pocket and extracted a box, packed, addressed, stamped, and ready for the post.

"What are you doing?" asked Mr. Mountshire. "Give me that parcel at once."

"Don't raise your voice," said Mr. Perth. "This is a thing to talk over quietly. Shall we come back to your office?"

"No. Why should I? Give me that parcel."

"I hate to discuss these things in a public place, but since you ask me, that box contains a pearl necklace, the property of Lady Favor. I may add that I myself saw you take it from her room. It is addressed in your handwriting to some gentleman with an address in Hatton Garden who happens to have the same name that you bore yourself before naturalization. Now, then, are we going into your office?"

"Very well," said Mr. Mountshire, gruffly.

**Mr. Perth made a sudden dive for Mr. Mountshire's coat pocket.**

They sat down, one on each side of the table, Mr. Mountshire white to the lips, with his hat still on.

"You say you saw me take the necklace?"

"I did."

"You couldn't have done. You were asleep in the hall when I went up and when I came down again."

"Not quite asleep. The moment you were out of sight I nipped into the service lift. It's not intended for passengers. A man of ordinary size couldn't get into it. But I could. I pressed the button and ran myself up to the first floor. I was there with the lift door just ajar before you were. The entrance to Lady Favor's suite was immediately opposite to me. I saw you let yourself in—you left the door open, by the way—and I saw you putting the necklace into your pocket as you came out. I ran the little lift down again and was apparently asleep in my chair as you passed. I knew you would get those pearls out of the place as soon as possible in order that when the loss was discovered you might issue your usual invitation to the police. You see——"

"Look here, what are you going to do? That's all I want to know. Are you a detective? Scotland Yard?"

"Oh, dear, no! I am a thief. I've already told you so once. But my speciality is that I steal only what is already stolen. I should be sorry to do anything to prejudice your position in this hotel, which you manage so admirably. I shall say nothing whatever about this little incident. The only difference as far as you are concerned will be that I shall have the pearls."

Mr. Mountshire was staggered, too absolutely surprised to show any fight or even to find a single word to say. At last he stammered:—

"But—but suppose I turn on you?"

"Don't be too silly, Mr. Mountshire. If you turn on me the necklace will be found in a box addressed in your handwriting to a relative of your own. What good would that do you?"

The little man passed out of the office holding his parcel somewhat ostentatiously and humming a tune as he went.

In his own room he sat down and thought. Poor Lady Favor! She would be distressed to lose those pearls. She was not a bad sort. She had been very kind to him—had helped to make his stay in the hotel pleasant. And after all he was not working at the moment, nor had he any pressing financial reason to work. He was resting. Well, the lock of an hotel bedroom door did not present any insuperable difficulty to him.

AND so Mr. Mountshire received a second shock that evening when Lady Favor, coming down to dinner, handed over to him the necklace in its case.

"I suppose," she said, "you'll get terribly savage if I don't give you this to take care of for me." And then she turned to the little man seated in a big chair just finishing his cocktail. He leaped up as she spoke.

"Mr. Perth," she said, "you must come and sit next me at dinner. You always make me laugh, and I'm feeling so dull."

# PERPLEXITIES.

## By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

### 800.—WAYS OF VOTING.

A CORRESPONDENT informs me that a certain Town Council took the poll of the town in regard to their Corporation Bill, and the ballot paper was arranged in this form:—

| | FOR | AGAINST |
|---|---|---|
| CLAUSE 1 | | |
| CLAUSE 2 | | |
| CLAUSE 3 | | |

except that the clauses were printed in full. He wants to know in how many different ways it is possible for a man to vote. The answer is, of course, quite easy but there is just one little point on which the reader is likely to trip; though to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

### 801.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

HERE is another old enigma well known to our grandmothers. Probably it will not give the reader much trouble.

I'm long, I'm short, I'm crooked, straight,
Sometimes I'm swift, and sometimes slow;
I'm strong, I'm weak, I'm small, I'm great,
I'm sometimes high, and sometimes low;
Though I've no brains, I have a head,
I can reflect and have a mouth;
Though dangerous when I leave my bed,
My help is sought from north to south;
With bulls and bears I do not rank,
You'll always find me at the bank

### 802.—A DEAL IN TURKEYS.

A MAN bought a number of turkeys at a cost of £60, and after reserving fifteen of the birds he sold the remainder for £54, thus gaining 2s. a head by these. How many turkeys did he buy?

### 803.—A DIGITAL SKELETON.

I HAVE been wondering whether this is really too easy and whether there is a large number of solutions to it. For every star must be substituted one of the digits, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0, each being used once only, so that we can get a correct division sum with the repeated 1 in the place shown.

```
**)***(*
  ***
  ---
  1*
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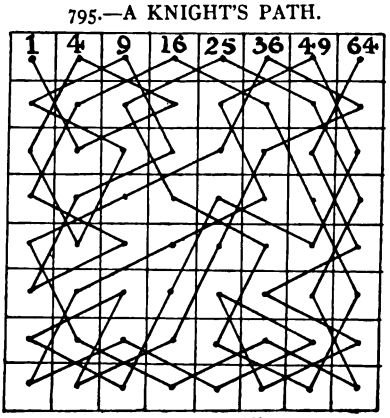
### 804.—CARD SHUFFLING.

I WONDER how many of my readers have ever considered this old puzzle. It was first investigated by a Frenchman named Monge in 1773, and many mathematicians have since worked at it. Cards are supposed to be shuffled in the following simple methodical way. Take the cards face downwards in your left hand, and then transfer them one by one to the right hand, putting the second on top of the first, the third under, the fourth above, the fifth under, and so on until all are transferred. An even number of cards should always be used because the last of an odd pack will always remain at the bottom and have no effect on shuffling. Now if you try this with four cards you will find that after three shuffles all the cards are in their original order. In fact, where the number of cards is 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, the number of shuffles required to get back to the original arrangement is 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 respectively. So you see it is quite easy to solve if the number of cards is a power of 2, but some other numbers are not quite so easy. I will simply give my readers the case of fourteen cards. How many shuffles are necessary in order to return to the original position? We have seen that for sixteen cards it only takes five such shuffles. How many will it take for fourteen?

## Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

### 795.—A KNIGHT'S PATH.




THE diagram explains itself. We are shown a complete Knight's path over the chessboard, and the numbers of the moves to the squares in the top row are successively 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, and 64 as required. I am afraid it can only be solved by trial accompanied by a certain amount of judgment.

### 796.—ANOTHER SKELETON.

IF you work out the following sum in simple division you will find it complies with all the conditions as to the location of the stars and the position of the single figure, 0.

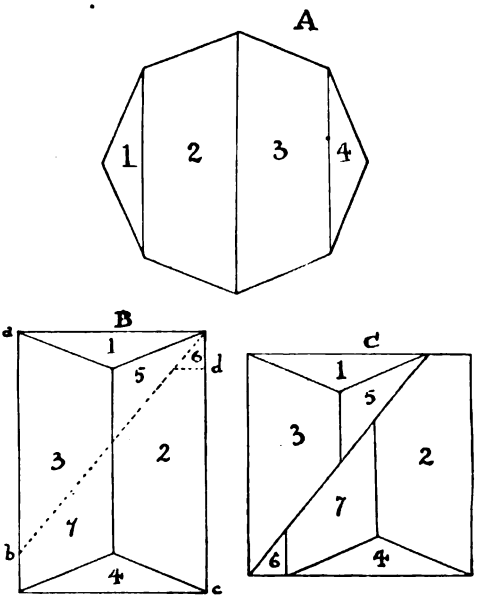
```
141) 1000395 (7095
```

I have only found this one solution, but with one star fewer in the dividend the answer would have been

```
140) 993300 (7095
```

### 797.—OCTAGON TO SQUARE.

THOUGH this puzzle is easy enough in eight pieces, it is a little more difficult in seven. First cut in four pieces as in A and place these together as in B to form




a rectangle. Having found the side of the square equal in area to the rectangle (a mean proportional between the latter's length and breadth) mark off this length from a to b and from c to d. Then make the two cuts indicated by the dotted line and you get the extra pieces 5, 6, and 7. The seven pieces will now fit together as in C and form a perfect square. I have quite a different solution in seven pieces by Lt.-Col. L. A. Arkwright, but his method of procedure would be more difficult to explain to the reader.

### 798.—QUEER DIVISION.

THE smallest number that fulfils the conditions of the puzzle is 35,641,667,749.

Larger numbers that will also serve may be obtained by adding 46,895,573,610 or any multiple of it. I cannot, of course, show here the manner of working.

### 799.—AN OLD CHARADE.

THE intended answer is, I think, undoubtedly WO-MAN.

In the old days the makers of these charades were not particularly careful about the spelling so long as the words were phonetically satisfying, so by WO we are of course to understand WOE.

# THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

## Contents for June, 1926.

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Frontispiece: It is not easy for a man who is standing on a bed with his hands up to achieve dignity, but Lord Emsworth did the best he could.


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| LORD EMSWORTH ACTS FOR THE BEST<br>Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver. | P. G. WODEHOUSE | 525 |
| THE CITY OF COURAGE<br>Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd. | GILBERT FRANKAU | 536 |
| "DAYS OF MY LIFE."—III.<br>Illustrations from Photographs and from Drawings by Frank Wiles, etc. | H. RIDER HAGGARD | 547 |
| "ORPHAN ANNIE"<br>Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd. | ALBERT KINROSS | 557 |
| THE T'ANG MIRROR<br>Illustrations by E. F. Sherie. | EDWARD KNOBLOCK | 562 |
| "WHAT SHALL I BE?" The Choice of a Career: | | |
| IV.—The Bar | SIR ERNEST E. WILD | 576 |
| V.—Banking | O. E. E. WOOD | 580 |
| VI.—The Metropolitan Police<br>Illustrations by Stanley Lloyd and Tom Peddie, and from Photographs. | BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR W. T. F. HORWOOD | 583 |
| TREASURE TROVE<br>Illustrations by S. Briault. | HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL | 587 |
| "SMOKE"<br>Illustrations by Arthur Watts. | LYNN DOYLE | 598 |
| ACROSTICS | | 600 |
| T.T. TEA, LTD.<br>Illustrations by L. G. Illingworth. | AUGUSTUS MUIR | 601 |
| THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TEST MATCHES<br>Illustrations by "Rip." | CECIL PARKIN | 611 |
| IN CONFIDENCE<br>Illustrations by J. M. Faulks. | W. H. WILLIAMSON | 619 |
| PERPLEXITIES | HENRY E. DUDENEY | 628 |


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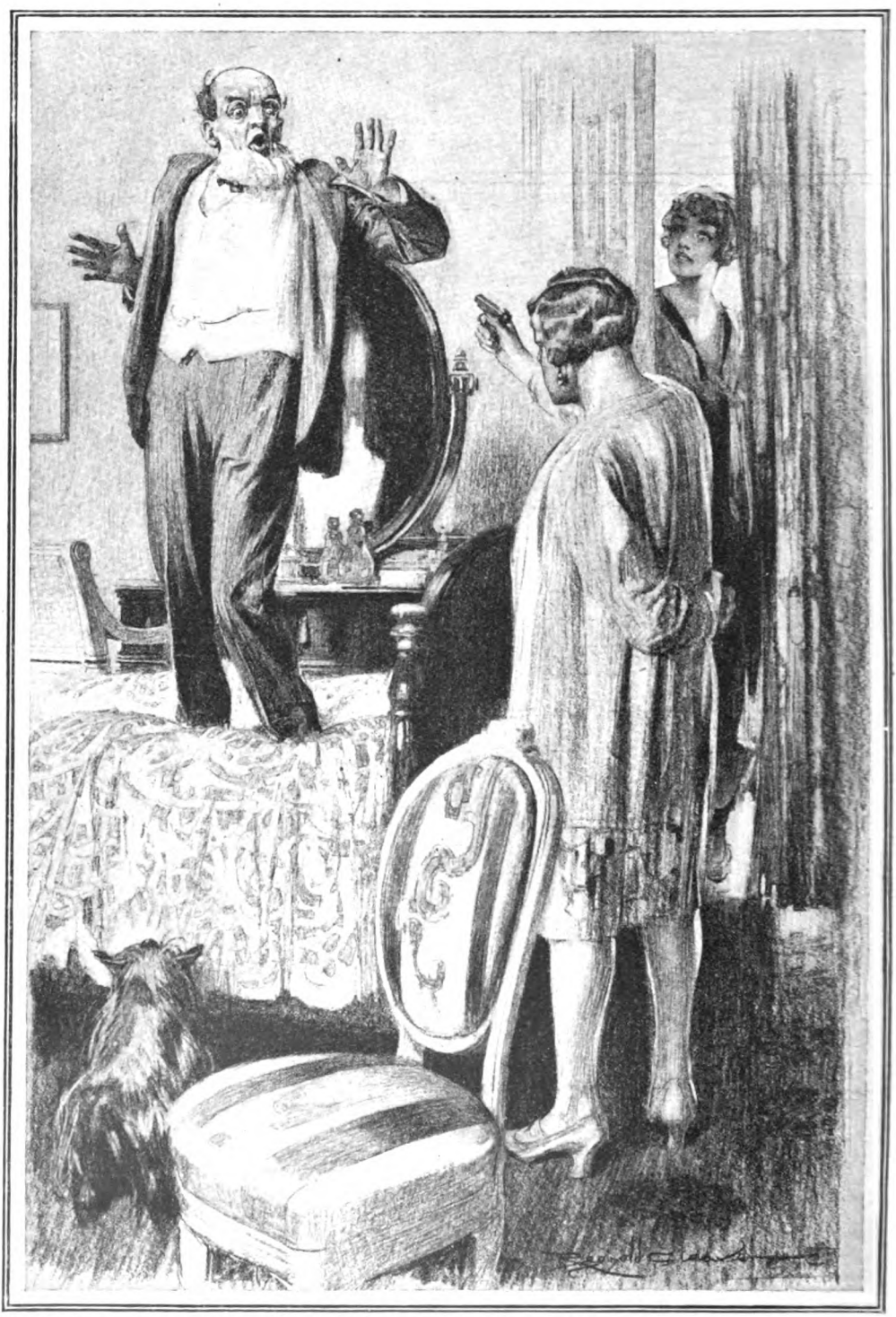
*To face back of Frontispiece.*

JUNE, 1926.



IT IS NOT EASY FOR A MAN WHO IS STANDING ON A BED WITH HIS HANDS UP TO ACHIEVE DIGNITY, BUT LORD EMSWORTH DID THE BEST HE COULD.

*(See page 530.)*

# Lord Emsworth acts for the best

By

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

*ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER*

THE housekeeper's room at Blandings Castle, G.H.Q. of the domestic staff that ministered to the needs of that amiable but woollen-headed peer, the Earl of Emsworth, was in normal circumstances a pleasant and cheerful apartment. It caught the afternoon sun; and the paper which covered its walls had been conceived in a jovial spirit by someone who held that the human eye, resting on ninety-seven simultaneous pink birds perched upon ninety-seven blue rose-bushes, could not but be agreeably stimulated and refreshed. Yet, with the entry of Beach, the butler, it was as though there had crept into its atmosphere a chill dreariness; and Mrs. Twemlow, the housekeeper, laying down her knitting, gazed at him in alarm.

"Whatever is the matter, Mr. Beach?"

The butler stared moodily out of the window. His face was drawn and he breathed heavily, as a man will who is suffering from a combination of strong emotion and adenoids. A ray of sunshine, which had been advancing jauntily along the carpet, caught sight of his face and slunk out, abashed.

"I have come to a decision, Mrs. Twemlow."

"What about?"

"Ever since his lordship started to grow it I have seen the writing on the wall plainer and plainer, and now I have made up my mind. The moment his lordship returns from London, I tender my resignation. Eighteen years have I served in his lordship's household, commencing as under-footman and rising to my present position, but now the end has come."

"You don't mean you're going just because his lordship has grown a beard?"

"It is the only way, Mrs. Twemlow. That beard is weakening his lordship's position throughout the entire countryside. Are you aware that at the recent Sunday-school treat I heard cries of 'Beaver!'?"

"No!"

"Yes! And this spirit of mockery and disrespect will spread. And, what is more, that beard is alienating the best elements in the County. I saw Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe look very sharp at it when he dined with us last Friday."

"It is not a handsome beard," admitted the housekeeper.

"It is not. It looks like some sort of fungus. And his lordship must be informed. As long as I remain in his lordship's service, it is impossible for me to speak. So I shall tender my resignation. Once that is done, my lips will no longer be sealed. Is that buttered toast under that dish, Mrs. Twemlow?"

"Yes, Mr. Beach. Take a slice. It will cheer you up."

"Cheer me up!" said the butler, with a hollow laugh that sounded like a knell.

IT was fortunate that Lord Emsworth, seated at the time of this conversation in the smoking-room of the Senior Conservative Club in London, had no suspicion of the supreme calamity that was about to fall upon him; for there was already much upon his mind.

In the last few days, indeed, everything seemed to have gone wrong. Angus McAllister, his head-gardener, had reported

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an alarming invasion of green-fly among the roses. A favourite and respected cow, strongly fancied for the Milk-Giving Jerseys event at the forthcoming Cattle Show, had contracted a mysterious ailment which was baffling the skill of the local vet. And on top of all this a telegram had arrived from his lordship's younger son, the Hon. Frederick Threepwood, announcing that he was back in England and desirous of seeing his father immediately.

This, felt Lord Emsworth, as he stared bleakly before him at the little groups of happy Senior Conservatives, was the most unkindest cut of all. What on earth was Freddie doing in England? Eighteen months before he had married the only daughter of Donaldson's Dog-Biscuits, of Long Island City, in the United States of America; and in Long Island City he ought now to have been, sedulously promoting the dog-biscuit industry's best interests. Instead of which, here he was in London—and, according to his telegram, in trouble.

Lord Emsworth passed a hand over his chin, to assist thought, and was vaguely annoyed by some obstacle that intruded itself in the path of his fingers. Concentrating his faculties, such as they were, on this obstacle, he discovered it to be his beard. It irritated him. Hitherto, in moments of stress, he had always derived comfort from the feel of a clean-shaven chin. He felt now as if he were rubbing his hand over seaweed; and most unjustly—for it was certainly not that young man's fault that he had decided to grow a beard—he became aware of an added sense of grievance against the Hon. Freddie.

It was at this moment that he perceived his child approaching him across the smoking-room floor.

"Hullo, guv'nor!" said Freddie.

"Well, Frederick?" said Lord Emsworth.

THERE followed a silence. Freddie was remembering that he had not met his father since the day when he had slipped into the latter's hand a note announcing his marriage to a girl whom Lord Emsworth had never seen—except once, through a telescope, when he, Freddie, was kissing her in the grounds of Blandings Castle. Lord Emsworth, on his side, was brooding on that phrase "in trouble," which had formed so significant a part of his son's telegram. For twenty years he had been reluctantly helping Freddie out of trouble; and now, when it had seemed that he was off his hands for ever, the thing had started all over again.

"Do sit down," he said, testily.

Freddie had been standing on one leg, and his constrained attitude annoyed Lord Emsworth. It is a peculiarity of many fathers in the ranks of Britain's aristocracy that practically every action on the part of their younger sons has the power to annoy them. Unlike the male codfish, which, suddenly becoming the parent of three million five hundred thousand little codfish, cheerfully resolves to love them all, the British aristocracy is apt to look with a jaundiced eye on its younger sons.

"Right-ho," said Freddie, taking a chair. "I say, guv'nor, since when the foliage?"

"What?"

"The beard. I hardly recognized you."

Another spasm of irritation shot through his lordship.

"Never mind my beard!"

"I don't if you don't," said Freddie, agreeably. "It was dashed good of you, guv'nor, to come bounding up to town so promptly."

"I came because your telegram said that you were in trouble."

"British," said Freddie, approvingly. "Very British."

"Though what trouble you can be in I cannot imagine. It is surely not money again?"

"Oh, no. Not money. If that had been all, I would have applied to the good old pop-in-law. Old Donaldson's an ace. He thinks the world of me."

"Indeed? I met Mr. Donaldson only once, but he struck me as a man of sound judgment."

"That's what I say. He thinks I'm a wonder. If it were simply a question of needing a bit of the ready, I could touch him like a shot. But it isn't money that's the trouble. It's Aggie. My wife, you know."

"Well?"

"She's left me."

"Left you!"

"Absolutely flat. Buzzed off, and the note pinned to the pin-cushion. She's now at the Savoy and won't let me come near her; and I'm at a service-flat in King Street, eating my jolly old heart out, if you know what I mean."

Lord Emsworth uttered a deep sigh. He gazed drearily at his son, marvelling that it should be in the power of any young man, even a specialist like Freddie, so consistently to make a mess of his affairs. By what amounted to a miracle this offspring of his had contrived to lure a millionaire's daughter into marrying him; and now, it seemed, he had let her get away. Years before, when a boy, and romantic as most boys are, his lordship had sometimes regretted that the Emsworths, though an ancient clan, did not possess a Family Curse. How little he had suspected that

he was shortly about to become the father of it!

"The fault," he said, tonelessly, "was, I suppose, yours?"

"In a way, yes. But——"

"What precisely occurred?"

"Well, it was like this, guv'nor. You know how keen I've always been on the movies. Going to every picture I could manage, and so forth. Well, one night, as I was lying awake, I suddenly got the idea for a scenario of my own. And dashed good it was, too. It was about a poor man who had an accident, and the coves at the hospital said that an operation was the only thing that could save his life. But they wouldn't operate without five hundred dollars down in advance, and he hadn't got five hundred dollars. So his wife got hold of a millionaire."

"What," inquired Lord Emsworth, "is all this drivel?"

"Drivel, guv'nor?" said Freddie, wounded. "I'm only telling you my scenario."

"I have no wish to hear it. What I am anxious to learn from you—in as few words as possible—is the reason for the breach between your wife and yourself."

"Well, I'm telling you. It all started with the scenario. When I'd written it, I naturally wanted to sell it to somebody; and just about then Pauline Petite came East and took a house at Great Neck, and a pal of mine introduced me to her."

"I say, guv'nor, since when the foliage?"

"What?"

"The beard. I hardly recognized you."

"Who is Pauline Petite?"

"Good heavens, guv'nor!" Freddie stared, amazed. "You don't mean to sit there and tell me you've never heard of Pauline Petite! The movie star. Didn't you ever see 'Passion's Slaves'?"

"I did not."

"Nor 'Silken Fetters'?"

"Never."

"Nor 'Purple Passion'? Nor 'Bonds of Gold'? Nor 'Seduction'? Great Scott, guv'nor, you haven't lived!"

"What about this woman?"

"Well, a pal introduced me to her, you see, and I started to pave the way to getting her interested in this scenario of mine. Because, if she liked it, of course it meant everything. Well, this involved seeing a good deal of her, you understand, and one night Jane Yorke happened to come on us having a bite together at an inn."

"Good God!"

"Oh, it was all perfectly respectable, guv'nor. All strictly on the up-and-up. Purely a business relationship. But the trouble was I had kept the thing from Aggie because I wanted to surprise her. I wanted to be able to come to her with the scenario accepted and tell her I wasn't such a fool as I looked."

"Any woman capable of believing that—"

"And most unfortunately I had said that I had to go to Chicago that night on business. So, what with one thing and another—— Well, as I said just now, she's at the Savoy and I'm——"

"Who is Jane Yorke?"

A scowl marred Freddie's smooth features.

"A pill, guv'nor. One of the worst. A Jebusite and Amalekite. If it hadn't been for her, I believe I could have fixed the thing. But she got hold of Aggie and whisked her away and poisoned her mind. This woman, guv'nor, has got a brother in the background, and she wanted Aggie to marry the brother. And my belief is that she is trying to induce Aggie to pop over to Paris and get a divorce, so as to give the blighted brother another look in, dash him! So now, guv'nor, is the time for action. Now is the moment to rally round as never before. I rely on you."

"Me? What on earth do you expect me to do?"

"Why, go to her and plead with her. They do it in the movies. I've seen thousands of pictures where the white-haired old father——"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Lord Emsworth, stung to the quick—for, like so many well-preserved men of ripe years, he was under the impression that he was merely slightly brindled. "You have made your bed, and you must stew in it."

"Eh?"

"I mean, you must stew in your own juice. You have brought this trouble on yourself by your own idiotic behaviour, and you must bear the consequences."

"You mean you won't go and plead?"

"No."

"You mean yes?"

"I mean no."

"Not plead?" said Freddie, desiring to get this thing clear.

"I refuse to allow myself to be drawn into the matter."

"You won't even give her a ring on the telephone?"

"I will not."

"Oh, come, guv'nor. Be a sport. Her suite's Number Sixty-Seven. You can get her in a second and state my case, all for the cost of twopence. Have a pop at it."

"No."

Freddie rose with set face. He looked like a sheep that has had bad news.

"Very well," he said, tensely. "Then I may as well tell you, guv'nor, that my life is as good as over. The future holds nothing for me. I am a spent egg. If Aggie goes to Paris and gets that divorce, I shall retire to some quiet spot and there pass the few remaining years of my existence, a blighted wreck. Good-bye, guv'nor."

"Good-bye."

"Honk-honk!" said Freddie, moodily.

As a general rule, Lord Emsworth was an early and a sound sleeper, one of the few qualities which he shared with Napoleon Bonaparte being the ability to slumber the moment his head touched the pillow. But that night, weighed down with his troubles, he sought unconsciousness in vain. And somewhere in the small hours of the morning he sat up in bed, quaking. A sudden grisly thought had occurred to him.

Freddie had stated that, in the event of his wife obtaining a divorce, he proposed to retire for the rest of his life to some quiet spot. Suppose by "quiet spot" he meant Blandings Castle! The possibility shook Lord Emsworth like an ague. Freddie had visited Blandings for extended periods before, and it was his lordship's considered opinion that the boy was a worse menace to the happy life of rural England than botts, green-fly, or foot-and-mouth disease. The prospect of having him at Blandings indefinitely affected Lord Emsworth like a blow on the base of the skull.

An entirely new line of thought was now opened. Had he in the recent interview, he asked himself, been as kind as he should have been? Had he not been a little harsh? Had he been just a shade lacking in

sympathy? Had he played quite the part a father ought to have played?

The answers to the questions, in the order stated, were as follows: No. Yes. Yes. And no.

Waking after a belated sleep and sipping his early tea, Lord Emsworth found himself full of a new resolve. He had changed his mind. It was his intention now to go to this daughter-in-law of his and plead with her as no father-in-law had ever pleaded yet.

A MAN who has had a disturbed night is not at his best on the following morning. Until after luncheon Lord Emsworth felt much too heavy-headed to do himself justice as a pleader. But a visit to the flowers at Kensington Gardens, followed by a capital chop and half a bottle of claret at the Regent Grill, put him into excellent shape. The heaviness had vanished, and he felt alert and quick-witted.

So much so that, on arriving at the Savoy Hotel, he behaved with a cunning of which he had never hitherto suspected himself capable. On the very verge of giving his name to the desk-clerk, he paused. It might well be, he reflected, that this daughter-in-law of his, including the entire Emsworth family in her feud, would, did she hear that he was waiting below, nip the whole programme in the bud by refusing to see him. Better, he decided, not to risk it. Moving away from the desk, he headed for the lift, and presently found himself outside the door of Suite Sixty-Seven.

He tapped on the door. There was no answer. He tapped again, and, once more receiving no reply, felt a little nonplussed. He was not a very far-seeing man, and the possibility that his daughter-in-law might not be at home had not occurred to him. He was about to go away when, peering at the door, he perceived that it was ajar. He pushed it open; and, ambling in, found himself in a cosy sitting-room, crowded, as feminine sitting-rooms are apt to be, with flowers of every description.

Flowers were always a magnet to Lord Emsworth, and for some happy minutes he pottered from vase to vase, sniffing.

It was after he had sniffed for perhaps the twentieth time that the impression came to him that the room contained a curious echo. It was almost as though, each time he sniffed, some other person sniffed too. And yet the place was apparently empty. To submit the acoustics to a final test, his lordship sniffed once more. But this time the sound that followed was of a more sinister character. It sounded to Lord Emsworth exactly like a snarl.

It was a snarl. Chancing to glance floorwards, he became immediately aware, in close juxtaposition to his ankles, of what appeared at first sight to be a lady's muff. But, this being one of his bright afternoons, he realized in the next instant that it was no muff, but a toy dog of the kind which women are only too prone to leave lying about their sitting-rooms.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed Lord Emsworth, piously commending his safety to Heaven, as so many of his rugged ancestors had done in rather similar circumstances on the battlefields of the Middle Ages.

He backed uneasily. The dog followed him. It appeared to have no legs, but to move by faith alone.

"Go away, sir!" said Lord Emsworth.

He hated small dogs. They nipped you. Take your eye off them, and they had you by the ankle before you knew where you were. Discovering that his manœuvres had brought him to a door, he decided to take cover. He opened the door and slipped through. Blood will tell. An Emsworth had taken cover at Agincourt.

He was now in a bedroom, and, judging by the look of things, likely to remain there for some time. The woolly dog, foiled by superior intelligence, was now making no attempt to conceal its chagrin. It had cast off all pretence of armed neutrality and was yapping with a hideous intensity and shrillness. And ever and anon it scratched with baffled fury at the lower panels.

"Go away, sir!" thundered his lordship.

"Who's there?"

Lord Emsworth leaped like a jumping bean. So convinced had he been of the emptiness of this suite of rooms that the voice, speaking where no voice should have been, crashed into his nerve centres like a shell.

"Who is there?"

The mystery, which had begun to assume an aspect of the supernatural, was solved. On the other side of the room was a door, and it was from behind this that the voice had spoken. It occurred to Lord Emsworth that it was merely part of the general malignity of Fate that he should have selected for a formal father-in-lawful call the moment when his daughter-in-law was taking a bath.

He approached the door, and spoke soothingly.

"Pray do not be alarmed, my dear."

"Who are you? What are you doing in my room?"

"There is no cause for alarm——"

He broke off abruptly, for his words had suddenly been proved fundamentally untrue. There was very vital cause for alarm. The

door of the bedroom had opened, and the muff-like dog, shrilling hate, was scuttling in its peculiar legless manner straight for his ankles.

Peril brings out unsuspected qualities in every man. Lord Emsworth was not a professional acrobat, but the leap he gave in this crisis would have justified his being mistaken for one. He floated through the air like a homing bird. From where he had been standing the bed was a considerable distance away, but he reached it with inches to spare, and stood there, quivering. Below him, the woolly dog raged like the ocean at the base of a cliff.

It was at this point that his lordship became aware of a young woman standing in the doorway through which he had just passed.

About this young woman there were many points which would have found little favour in the eyes of a critic of feminine charm. She was too short, too square, and too solid. She had a much too determined chin. And her hair was of an unpleasing gingery hue. But the thing Lord Emsworth liked least about her was the pistol she was pointing at his head.

A plaintive voice filtered through the bathroom door.

"Who's there?"

"It's a man," said the girl behind the gun.

"I know it's a man. He spoke to me. Who is he?"

"I don't know. A nasty-looking fellow. I saw him hanging about the passage outside your door, and I got my gun and came along. Come on out."

"I can't. I'm all wet."

It is not easy for a man who is standing on a bed with his hands up to achieve dignity, but Lord Emsworth did the best he could.

"My dear madam!"

"What are you doing here?"

"I found the door ajar——"

"And walked in to see if there were any jewel-cases ajar, too. I think," added the young woman, raising her voice so as to make herself audible to the unseen bather, "it's Dopey Smith."

"Who?"

"Dopey Smith. The fellow the cops said tried for your jewels in New York. He must have followed you over here."

"I am not Dopey Smith, madam," cried his lordship. "I am the Earl of Emsworth."

"You are?"

"Yes, I am."

"Yes, you are!"

"I came here to see my daughter-in-law."

"Well, here she is."

THE bathroom door opened, and there emerged a charming figure draped in a kimono. Even in that tense moment Lord Emsworth was conscious of a bewildered astonishment that such a girl could ever have stooped to mate with his son Frederick.

"Who did you say he was?" she asked, recommending herself still more strongly to his lordship's esteem by scooping up the woolly dog and holding it securely in her arms.

"He says he's the Earl of Emsworth."

"I *am* the Earl of Emsworth."

The girl in the kimono looked keenly at him as he descended from the bed.

"You know, Jane," she said, a note of uncertainty in her voice, "it might be. He looks very like Freddie."

The appalling slur on his personal appearance held Lord Emsworth dumb. Like other men, he had had black moments when his looks had not altogether satisfied him, but he had never supposed that he had a face like Freddie's.

The girl with the pistol uttered a stupefying whoop.

"Jiminy Christmas!" she cried. "Don't you see?"

"See what?"

"Why, it *is* Freddie. Disguised. Trying to get at you this way. It's just the sort of movie stunt he would think clever. Take them off, Ralph Vandeleur—I know you!"

She reached out a clutching hand, seized his lordship's beard in a vice-like grip, and tugged with all the force of a modern girl, trained from infancy at hockey, tennis, and Swedish exercises.

It had not occurred to Lord Emsworth a moment before that anything could possibly tend to make his situation more uncomfortable than it already was. He saw now that he had been mistaken in this view. Agony beyond his liveliest dreams flamed through his shrinking frame.

The girl regarded him with a somewhat baffled look.

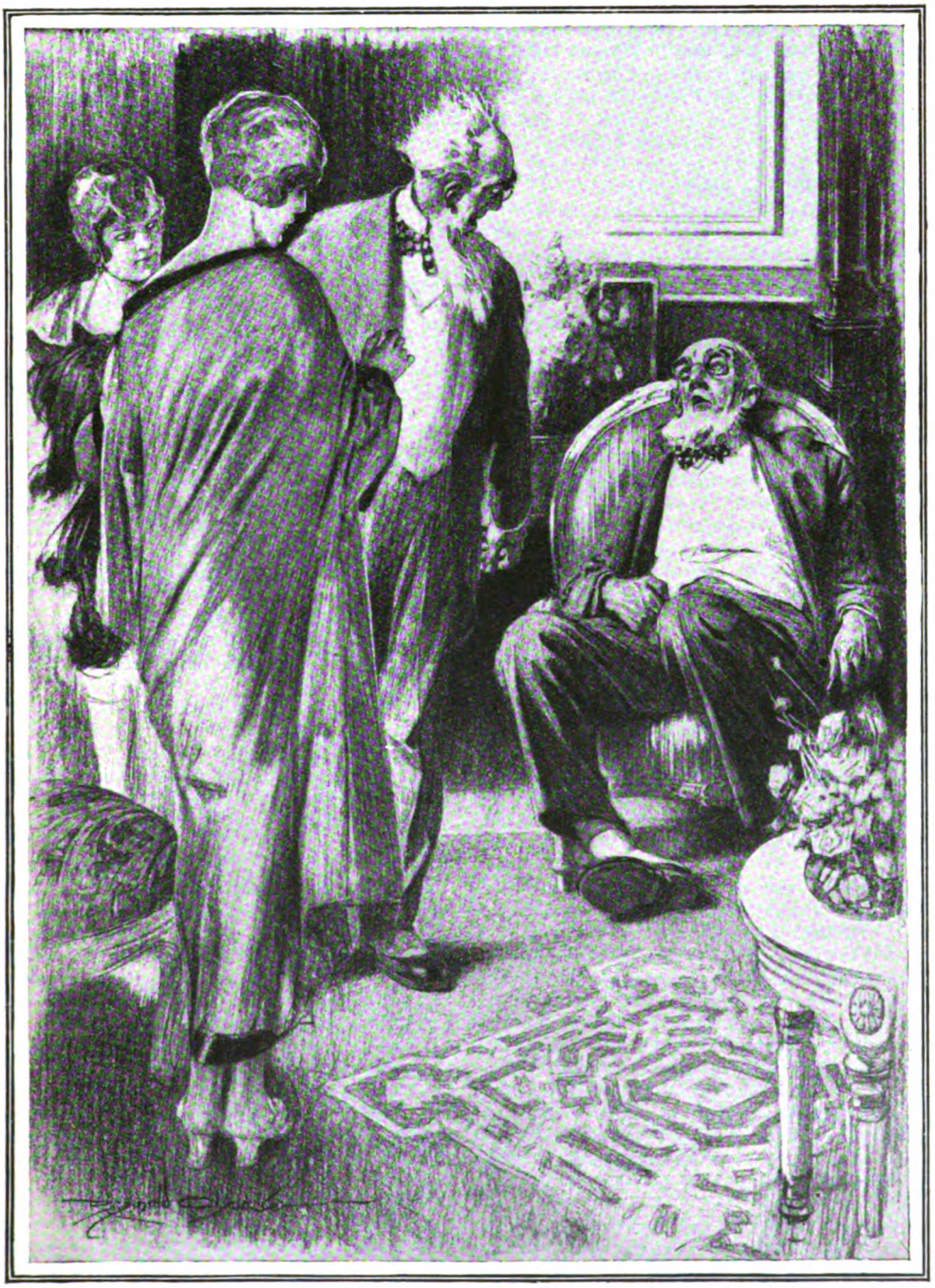
"H'm!" she said, disappointedly. "It seems to be real. Unless," she continued, on a more optimistic note, "he's fixed it on with specially strong fish-glue or something. I'd better try again."

"No, don't," said his lordship's daughter-in-law. "It isn't Freddie. I would have recognized him at once."

"Then he's a crook after all. Kindly step into that cupboard, George, while I 'phone for the constabulary."

Lord Emsworth danced a few steps.

"I will not step into cupboards. I insist on being heard. I don't know who this woman is——"



"I thought he was Lord Emsworth all the time," said the girl. "Surely you can see the likeness now?"

A kind of wail escaped his lordship.

"My name's Jane Yorke, if you're curious."

"Ah! The woman who poisons my son's wife's mind against him! I know all about you." He turned to the girl in the kimono. "Yesterday my son Frederick implored me by telegram to come to London. I saw him at my club. Stop that dog barking!"

"Why shouldn't he bark?" said Miss Yorke. "He's in his own home."

"He told me," proceeded Lord Emsworth, raising his voice, "that there had been a little misunderstanding between you——"

"Little misunderstanding is good," said Miss Yorke.

"He dined with that woman for a purpose."

"And directly I saw them," said Miss Yorke, "I knew what the purpose was."

The Hon. Mrs. Threepwood looked at her friend, wavering.

"I believe it's true," she said, "and he really is Lord Emsworth. He seems to know all that happened. How could he know if Freddie hadn't told him?"

"If this fellow is a crook from the other side, of course he would know. The thing was in *Broadway Whispers* and *Town Gossip*, wasn't it?"

"All the same——"

The telephone-bell rang sharply.

"I assure you——" began Lord Emsworth.

"Right!" said the unpleasant Miss Yorke, at the receiver. "Send him right up." She regarded his lordship with a brightly triumphant eye. "You're out of luck, my friend," she said. "Lord Emsworth has just arrived, and he's on his way up now."

THERE are certain situations in which the human brain may be excused for reeling. Lord Emsworth's did not so much reel as perform a kind of shimmy, as if it were in danger of coming unstuck. Always a dreamy and absent-minded man, unequal to the rough hurly-burly of life, he had passed this afternoon through an ordeal which might well have unsettled the most practical. And this extraordinary announcement, coming on top of all he had been through, was too much for him. He tottered into the sitting-room and sank into a chair. It seemed to him that he was living in a nightmare.

And certainly in the figure that entered a few moments later there was nothing whatever to correct this impression. It might have stepped straight into anybody's nightmare and felt perfectly at home right from the start.

The figure was that of a tall, thin man with white hair and a long and flowing beard of the same venerable hue. Strange as it seemed that a person of such appearance should not have been shot on sight early in his career, he had obviously reached an extremely advanced age. He was either a man of about a hundred and fifty who was rather young for his years or a man of about a hundred and ten who had been aged by trouble.

"My dear child!" piped the figure in a weak, quavering voice.

"Freddie!" cried the girl in the kimono.

"Oh, dash it!" said the figure.

There was a pause, broken by a sort of gasping moan from Lord Emsworth. More and more every minute his lordship was feeling the strain.

"Good God, guv'nor!" said the figure, sighting him. His wife pointed at Lord Emsworth.

"Freddie, is that your father?"

"Oh, yes. Rather! Of course. Absolutely. But he said he wasn't coming."

"I changed my mind," said Lord Emsworth in a low, stricken voice.

"I told you so, Jane," said the girl. "I thought he was Lord Emsworth all the time. Surely you can see the likeness now?"

A kind of wail escaped his lordship.

"Do I look like that?" he said brokenly. He gazed at his son once more and shut his eyes.

"Well," said Miss Yorke, in her detestable managing way, turning her forceful personality on the new-comer, "now that you are here, Freddie Threepwood, looking like Father Christmas, what's the idea? Aggie told you never to come near her again."

A young man of his natural limpness of character might well have retired in disorder before this attack, but Love had apparently made Frederick Threepwood a man of steel. Removing his beard and eyebrows, he directed a withering glance at Miss Yorke.

"I don't want to talk to you," he said. "You're a serpent in the bosom. I mean a snake in the grass."

"Oh, am I?"

"Yes, you are. You poisoned Aggie's jolly old mind against me. If it hadn't been for you, I could have got her alone and told her my story as man to man."

"Well, let's hear it now. You've had plenty of time to rehearse it."

Freddie turned to his wife with a sweeping gesture.

"I——" He paused. "I say, Aggie, old thing, you look perfectly topping in that kimono."

"Stick to the point," said Miss Yorke.

"That is the point," said Mrs. Freddie, not without a certain softness. "But if

you think I look perfectly topping, why do you go running around with movie-actresses with carroty hair ? "

" Red-gold," suggested Freddie, deferentially.

" Carroty ! "

" Carroty it is. You're absolutely right. I never liked it all along."

" Then why were you dining with it ? "

" Yes, why ? " inquired Miss Yorke.

" I wish you wouldn't butt in," said Freddie, petulantly. " I'm not talking to you."

" You might just as well, for all the good it's going to do you."

" Be quiet, Jane. Well, Freddie ? "

" Aggie," said the Hon. Freddie, " it was this way."

" Never believe a man who starts a story like that," said Miss Yorke.

" Do please be quiet, Jane. Yes, Freddie ? "

" I was trying to sell that carroty female a scenario, and I was keeping it from you because I wanted it to be a surprise."

" Freddie darling ! Was that really it ? "

" You don't mean to say——" began Miss Yorke, incredulously.

" Absolutely it. And, in order to keep in with the woman—whom, I may as well tell you, I disliked rather heartily from the start—I had to lush her up a trifle from time to time."

" Of course."

" You have to with these people."

" Naturally."

" Makes all the difference in the world if you push a bit of food into them preparatory to talking business."

" All the difference in the world."

Miss Yorke, who seemed temporarily to have lost her breath, recovered it.

" You don't mean to tell me," she cried, turning in a kind of wild despair to the injured wife, " that you really believe this apple sauce ? "

" Of course she does," said Freddie. " Don't you, precious ? "

" Of course I do, sweetie-pie."

" And, what's more," said Freddie, pulling from his breast-pocket a buff-coloured slip of paper with the air of one who draws from his sleeve that extra ace which makes all the difference in a keenly-contested game, " I can prove it. Here's a cable that came this morning from the Super-Ultra-Art Film Company, offering me a thousand merry dollars for the scenario. So another time, you, will you kindly refrain from judging your—er—fellows by the beastly light of your own—ah—foul imagination ? "

" Yes," said his wife, " I must say, Jane, that you have made as much mischief as anyone ever did. I wish in future you would stop interfering in other people's concerns."

" Spoken," said Freddie, " with vim and not a little terse good sense. And I may add——"

" If you ask me," said Miss Yorke, " I think it's a fake."

" What's a fake ? "

" That cable."

" What do you mean, a fake ? " cried Freddie, indignantly. " Read it for yourself."

" It's quite easy to get cables cabled you by cabling a friend in New York to cable them."

" I don't get that," said Freddie, puzzled.

" I do," said his wife ; and there shone in her eyes the light that shines only in the eyes of wives who, having swallowed their husband's story, resent destructive criticism from outsiders. " And I never want to see you again, Jane Yorke."

" Same here," agreed Freddie. " In Turkey they'd have shoved a girl like that in a sack and dropped her in the Bosphorus."

" I might as well go," said Miss Yorke.

" And don't come back," said Freddie. " The door is behind you."

THE species of trance which had held Lord Emsworth in its grip during the preceding conversational exchanges was wearing off. And now, perceiving dimly that Miss Yorke was apparently as unpopular with the rest of the company as with himself, he came gradually to life again. His recovery was hastened by the slamming of the door and the spectacle of his son Frederick clasping in his arms a wife who, his lordship had never forgotten, was the daughter of probably the only millionaire in existence who had that delightful willingness to take Freddie off his hands which was, in Lord Emsworth's eyes, the noblest quality a millionaire could possess.

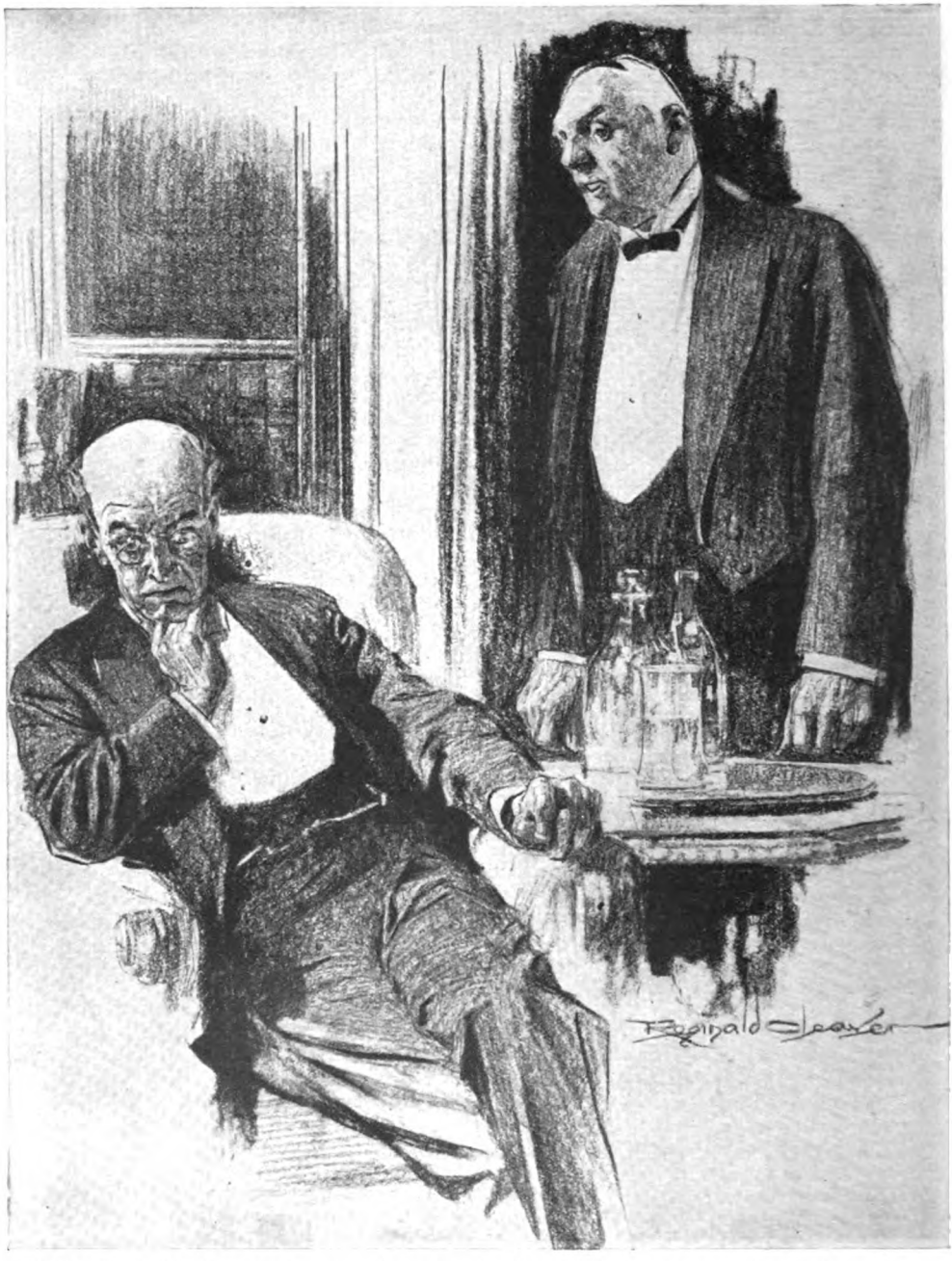
He sat up and blinked feebly. Though much better, he was still weak.

" What was your scenario about, sweetness ? " asked Mrs. Freddie.

" I'll tell you, angel-face. Or should we stir up the guv'nor ? He seems a bit under the weather."

" Better leave him to rest for awhile. That woman Jane Yorke upset him."

" She would upset anybody. If there's one person I bar, it's the blister who comes between man and wife. Not right, I mean, coming between man and wife. My scenario's about a man and wife. This fellow, you understand, is a poor cove—no money, if you see what I mean—and he has an accident, and the hospital coves say they won't operate unless he can chip in with five



"Mr. Frederick instructed me to give your lordship his best wishes, and to tell you that, when the millionaire and Mr. Cove's wife entered the bedroom, there was a black jaguar tied to the foot of the bed."

hundred dollars down in advance. But where to get it? You see the situation?"

"Oh, yes."

"Strong, what?"

"Awfully strong."

"Well, it's nothing to how strong it gets later on. The cove's wife gets hold of a millionaire bloke and vamps him and lures

him to the flat and gets him to promise he'll cough up the cash. Meanwhile, cut-backs of the doctor at the hospital on the 'phone. Sub-title: Have you got the money? And she laughing merrily so as not to let the millionaire bloke guess that her heart is aching. I forgot to tell you the cove had to be operated on immediately or he would hand in his dinner-pail. Dramatic, eh?"

"Frightfully."

"Well, then the millionaire bloke demands his price. I thought of calling it 'A Woman's Price.'"

"Splendid."

"And now comes the blow-out. They go into the bedroom and—— Oh, hullo, guv'nor! Feeling better?"

Lord Emsworth had risen. He was tottering a little as he approached them, but his mind was at rest.

"Much better, thank you."

"You know my wife, what?"

"Oh, Lord Emsworth," said Mrs. Freddie, "I'm so dreadfully sorry. I wouldn't have had anything like this happen for the world. But——"

Lord Emsworth patted her hand paternally. Once more he was overcome with astonishment that his son Frederick should have been able to win the heart of a girl so beautiful, so sympathetic, so extraordinarily rich.

"The fault was entirely mine, my dear child. But——" He paused. Something was plainly troubling him. "Tell me, when Frederick was wearing that beard—when Frederick was—was—when he was wearing that beard, did he really look like me?"

"Oh, yes. Very like."

"Thank you, my dear. That was all I wanted to know. I will leave you now. You will want to be alone. You must come down to Blandings, my dear child, at the very earliest opportunity."

He walked thoughtfully from the room.

"Does this hotel," he inquired of the man who took him down in the lift, "contain a barber's shop?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wonder if you would direct me to it?" said his lordship.

LORD EMSWORTH sat in his library at Blandings Castle, drinking that last restful whisky-and-soda of the day. Through the open window came the scent of flowers and the little noises of the summer night.

He should have been completely at rest, for much had happened since his return to sweeten life for him. Angus McAllister had reported that the green-fly were yielding to treatment with whale-oil solution; and the stricken cow had taken a sudden turn for the better, and at last advices was sitting up and taking nourishment with something of the old appetite. Moreover, as he stroked his shaven chin, his lordship felt a better, lighter man, as if some burden had fallen from him.

And yet, as he sat there, a frown was on his forehead.

He rang the bell.

"Your lordship?"

Lord Emsworth looked at his faithful butler with appreciation. Deuce of a long time Beach had been at the Castle, and would, no doubt, be there for many a year to come. A good fellow. Lord Emsworth had liked the way the man's eyes had lighted up on his return, as if the sight of his employer had removed a great weight from his mind.

"Oh, Beach," said his lordship, "kindly put in a trunk-call to London on the telephone."

"Very good, your lordship."

"Get through to Suite Number Sixty-Seven at the Savoy Hotel, and speak to Mr. Frederick."

"Yes, your lordship."

"Say that I particularly wish to know how that scenario of his ended."

"Scenario, your lordship?"

"Scenario."

"Very good, your lordship."

Lord Emsworth returned to his reverie. Time passed. The butler returned.

"I have spoken to Mr. Frederick, your lordship."

"Yes?"

"He instructed me to give your lordship his best wishes, and to tell you that, when the millionaire and Mr. Cove's wife entered the bedroom, there was a black jaguar tied to the foot of the bed."

"A jaguar?"

"A jaguar, your lordship. Mrs. Cove stated that it was there to protect her honour, whereupon the millionaire, touched by this, gave her the money. Mr. Cove made a satisfactory recovery after his operation, your lordship."

"Ah!" said Lord Emsworth, expelling a deep breath. "Thank you, Beach, that is all."

# THE CITY OF COURAGE

Being in some respects a sequel to a very old poem I wrote, "The City of Fear."

By

# GILBERT FRANKAU

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

I.

"I SHOULDN'T worry about getting that little balance right, Sanders—the auditors will be coming in in a day or so." "I shouldn't worry about getting that little balance right, Sanders—the auditors will be coming in in a day or so." "I shouldn't worry about getting that little balance right, Sanders—the auditors will be coming in in a day or so."

The words went on—on and on and on in Ned Sanders' mind as he took his coat from the peg; as he made his way out of the office; as he bade his usual good night to the commissionaire; as he trod the wet pavements of Old Broad Street; as he let himself mingle, his soft hat spotted by the fallen rain-drops, with the swirling crowds of humanity at the Bank station of the Central London Tube.

"I shouldn't worry about getting that little balance right, Sanders—the auditors will be coming in in a day or so."

On and on the words went—as the train started, as he changed trains at the Circus, as he came to Baker Street, as he hunched himself, too miserable (and too frightened) even to read his evening paper, in the corner of the crowded third-class compartment which was to carry him home.

His mind no longer visualized the face of the man who had spoken those words—the square forehead and the resolute eyes and the kindly mouth of his "junior boss"; of "our Mr. Fleming," who had once been "our Major" Fleming, and the one "white man" who had given a discharged subaltern his chance of making good after the war.

No! His mind could not visualize Fleming; could not visualize anything out of the past; could not even visualize the immediate present; could only visualize the immediate future.

Damn it, his mind couldn't face that immediate future—the auditor's clerks, prying here, prying there, checking, checking, checking, until—— Damn it, he *wouldn't* face that immediate future. Anything would be better than that. Anything—even life without Lucy.

Lucy! For a second his young wife's face shimmered, pale and pure and trustful, on the screen-board of Ned Sanders' brain. Then his vision lost her again—lost everything except its apprehensions—its fear of the future—its picture of that one auditor's clerk checking, checking, checking, until—— Until *they* found out.

And after that? What would they do to him? What would "old man" Fleming do to him? Give him in charge? Jail him? He couldn't stand jail! He *wouldn't* stand jail—not a prison—not *bars*.

With a start Ned Sanders came to himself. The carriage was a bit emptier now; and they must be nearing Wickenham Halt. He looked about him; thanked God that the "fellow up the road" wasn't in the carriage; thanked God Lucy wouldn't be at home.

Home! And he'd smashed it up—smashed it up trying to make it—smashed it up trying to make things a bit easier for Lucy—trying to keep a servant for her, and a boy to do the garden, and a car. Had he, though? Was that the real truth? Hadn't he smashed it up by gambling, by trying

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to get rich quickly, by buying those blinking rubber shares, by hanging on to those blinking rubber shares, by paying his differences on those blinking rubber shares, till he couldn't go on paying and had to borrow a bit out of the Imprest Account?

Imprest Account! What the devil was he thinking about? There weren't such things as Imprest Accounts any more. He'd "borrowed a bit" of other people's money; of old man Fleming's money. And the Law wouldn't call it borrowing. And old man Fleming's son was the only pal who'd stood by him when he came out of the Army. Old man Fleming's son had given him the job without which he couldn't have married Lucy. Why *had* he married Lucy? What was the use of his having married Lucy, only to drag her down?

The train was at a standstill now; and automatically Ned Sanders hurried across the platform; hurried past the porter at the gate; hurried into Wickenham Lane.

He felt glad that there would be no Lucy, no trustful little Lucy to welcome him.

He reached the gate and went up the gravel-path and into his house.

The house—it seemed to him—was icy. He felt himself shiver as he inserted his latch-key; as he wiped his boots on the mat; as he closed the front door behind him; as he made his way into the sitting-room; as he lit the gas-fire in the sitting-room; as he sat himself down, still overcoated, in the big basket-chair that fronted the fire.

II.

"YOUR supper is in the dining-room, Mr. Sanders. It's cold, but I've hotted you some potatoes. What would you like to drink with it? Beer?"

"Yes, please, Mary. Beer."

Lucy's little general servant went out of the sitting-room; and wearily Ned Sanders rose from his chair. His tweed overcoat was all steamy from the heat of the fire. As he peeled it off, as he went to wash his hands, he could still feel himself shivering—shivering as he had seen men shiver years and years ago in those ten minutes before the "zero" of some big attack. And when he looked at his face in the tiny mirror of the tiny ground-floor cloak-room, his face, too, reminded him of those minutes. For the features of it looked grey, haggarded with apprehension, the lips twitching under the clipped brown of his moustache, the dark eyes shrunk to pin points, tiny drops of perspiration beading the damp brow. He wiped away those drops with a towel. But the drops broke out again before he had sat down to his cold beef and beer.

Trying to eat, trying to drink, he could hear through the thin dividing wall between him and the kitchen the muffled voices of Mary and her "friend." He caught himself shuddering at those voices, wondering what Mary would say, what Mary's friend would say, when they knew about him. For, of course, everybody *would* know about him, in a day or so, when the auditors had done their checking. . . .

At last he managed to finish his supper; and at last Mary's friend went. He heard them say good-bye to one another at the side gate; heard Mary come back into the house. Habit made him call to her, "You can clear away now"; and she cleared away, noisily, making eyes at him over her tray. "You'll be glad to have the Missis back, I expect," said Mary. "So shall I. It's lonely-like being here by oneself all the time. Oh, yes, I'll be glad enough when it's Tuesday, I shall!"

Mary, still clattering the supper-tray, went out. Presently he heard her washing up; and presently she went to bed. A good girl, Mary! The best they had had. Things had been easier for Lucy since Mary came. Otherwise she'd never have been able to take this little holiday, visit her parents, her old home.

Lucy's parents! They would know, too. *Everybody* would know. And Lucy's parents thought so well of him. Everybody thought so well of him. The hell of it. The absolute, unadulterated, miserable, *stupid* hell.

Yes, stupid. That was what hurt so. He'd thought himself so clever, such a good business man when he bought those blinking Telam Sukis—"a cinch, old man, an absolute bally cinch."

Wearily Ned Sanders went back to the sitting-room, relighted the fire, and tried to remember—just to steady himself—the name of the man who had first put him on to those Telam Suki shares. But the name eluded him, and he couldn't steady himself, couldn't even control the twitching of his hands. His hands wanted to do something for him; to take him away out of all this—this mess he had made. After all, there was a way out. . . .

The little hall, as he emerged into it, was in darkness; so was the bedroom floor above. And again he felt glad of darkness, because it told him that Mary must be asleep.

"It won't wake her," he thought. "Not if I do it in the garden. In the shed, perhaps. The shed's a sound scheme. People may think it was an accident if I do it in the shed." And so thinking, taking care not to touch the closed door of the room he always shared with Lucy, he felt his way towards his own.

Lucy always called his own room the pigsty; and he remembered that as he closed the door behind him, as he fumbled for the switch and let raw light on to the litter that clumbered the cheap dressing-table and the wall-pegs and the light oak chair-backs and the unused bed. But he wasn't going to think about Lucy. He wasn't going to think about anything—except the job of making his way out look like an accident—as it would look like an accident if only he could find his cleaning-rod and a spot of gun oil, and a four-by-two rag, and one cartridge, just one cartridge that people who knew about such things might think had been left in the barrel after he'd taken out the magazine of that automatic pistol he'd snaffled from a dead Hun.

The pistol was there all right—hanging where it always hung. But he couldn't find the cleaning-rod of his old Webley, nor the gun oil—only a dirty packet of four-by-twos, and some half-a-dozen cartridges in the worn haversack on the foot of his bed. "What's the use?" he thought suddenly. "Nobody will think it was an accident, anyway. Let's get it over. Let's get the job done."

Yet, somehow, he couldn't stomach the idea of getting the job done crudely. Somehow it didn't seem right that it shouldn't look like an accident—not quite fair, you know; not quite playing the game.

AND from that—his purpose wavering—he fell to considering all sorts of strange, irrelevant issues; his promise to raise the garden-boy's wages, and Lucy's promise that Mary should have a new black dress, and why the gas-bill had been so high last quarter, and how much they still owed on the furniture they'd bought last March. Till finally, not knowing why he did so, he emptied the worn haversack on to the bed.

All sorts of forgotten things fell out of that haversack—an exploded shell-fuse which he had always meant to polish up for a paper-weight, and an electric torch, and an "iron" ration, and a field dressing, and a handful of the old shiny buttons he had worn on his tunic in the days before war had taught him that shiny buttons made easy bull's-eyes when a man went over the top.

"Did I ever really go over the top?" he asked himself; and again, having answered himself, "But if I wasn't killed then, why should I be killed now?" And on that, as his twitching hand still fumbled among the litter out of the haversack, his twitching mind began to fumble for another easier way out of the mess.

"Why shouldn't I make a bolt for it?" he said to himself. "Why shouldn't I get out of England while there's still time?"

The cowardice of this other way troubled him a little; but he argued with himself that his first impulse, suicide, had been cowardly too. Then he began to ask himself whither he should bolt; and whether he had enough money for bolting; and whether he ought to leave a letter telling Lucy why he had bolted; and how he could best get away from Wickenham, and whether he would catch one of the workmen's trains or take the car.

He was feeling calmer now; and his hands seemed to have ceased their twitching; and various objects in the untidy room showed themselves purposeful to him under the hard unshaded light. The haversack, for example, and those easy Army boots, and the trench-coat, and the laced breeches, and his old trench stick, and a civilian cap—all these would be useful, make a kind of disguise. For, of course, he couldn't go in the car. Because the car would help people to trace him. And, besides, the car was really Lucy's—he'd given it to her when he first bought it for sixty quid off the fellow up the road.

"The bus is still worth a bit," he decided. "Even if it's only a pony. Lucy ought to be able to get that for it. She'll have to sell things, I expect, to keep going after I've gone."

For now, suddenly, reasonlessly, decision crystallized. He *would* go; and take what cash there was in the house with him. What a bit of luck that he should have a passport—the one Flemings had got for him when they sent him over to see that client in France!

## III.

PANICKED men rarely sleep, neither are they wise to those time-divisions which ordinary folk call hours and days. Accordingly, for Ned Sanders, travelling steadily along a certain straight road which leads between still-scarred poplars unto that place which new lives and old deaths make one great Book of Remembrance for such of us as have eyes to read, all those hours which had elapsed between this moment and the moment when his fears had decided on flight from England were mentally kaleidoscoped, mentally concertinaed, a mere blur and jumble of confusing pictures to his drowsy brain. And in that picture-jumble Ned Sanders saw himself, almost as wounded men under the morphia see themselves, doing half-a-dozen, a dozen, two dozen queer little actions, each and every one of which had somehow concatenated towards his present state.

He remembered, for instance, and quite

clearly, that while searching for his passport among the desk-drawers in the sitting-room he had noticed a calendar; also, that he had torn a leaf from the calendar because it was Saturday, the tenth of October, and not, as the calendar stated, Friday, the ninth.

This action, for no particular reason, seemed of considerable import to him; as did his scribbling of a letter telling Mary that he was going away for the week-end. But, following on that last action, the pictures became inconsequent. There was a gap here, a gap bridged only by the dawn, and a gate clicking, and a train, and then an omnibus, and then another train, and finally a quay—a long quay down which a man went, his knees wobbling a little under the flaps of his trench-coat, towards an English police-constable, and past him into a kind of a shed where a very wide-awake official said, "British subject? That's all right, then. Just take this ticket and they'll let you aboard."

Followed a ship, and the man standing at the prow of the ship, and ages before the ship docked, and more ages before the man could get free of the ship, before he found himself walking along another quay between shabby houses into an unknown foreign-looking kind of a square, where old bells jangled at him from a grey tower while he stood looking at a green bronze statue—or rather at a group of green bronze statues—queerly contorted, yet somehow queerly alive in their contortions of green bronze.

Ned Sanders, still travelling that straight road between the poplars, did not realize—possibly because he had never cared to know about such things—that the statues of his remembrance were Rodin's. He didn't even know that the square in which he had seen them had been the Place d'Armes at Calais. He only knew that the green bronze statues had frightened him because, somehow, they typified captivity; and that in his fright he had seen a sign, "Money Exchanged"; and that the sign had been in some sort of a *café*; and that he had entered that *café*, and passed some notes, English pound notes, across a bar to a woman who had given him other notes, French ones, in exchange; and that after that he had made his way away from the statues, not hurriedly, because hurry betrayed a man, yet at a steady infantry kind of a pace.

There had been something rather comforting about that pace; and once free of the town,

**Mary cleared away, noisily, making eyes at him over her tray.**

Ned Sanders had experienced a queer sensation of relief from fright, the sort of sensation that came to a fellow when he led his men into rest billets after a week up the line. But here was another gap, bridged only by sound—by the scrunch of a man's marching boots, and the whistle of the wind, and an occasional motor-honk, or the rap of horse-hoofs on *pavé* as a cart came by. And somewhere among those sounds he had heard another; the noise of a spanner on steel. And close on that noise came his picture of the stopped lorry.

Ned Sanders remembered trying to avoid that stopped lorry, to hurry round it and away; remembered that a renewal of fright had warned him to have nothing to do with that lorry or with the spanner-man, because

both were English, and he must not meet with anything English lest he betray the direction of his flight. That was what made it seem so curious that he hadn't been able to avoid that lorry, but just dropped into conversation with the spanner-man, and helped him to change his wheel, and told him some lie about being on a walking tour over the week-end. Yet once he had told that lie, it seemed perfectly natural that the grateful driver should have offered him a lift on the lorry—because lorry-jumping always had been the quickest way about this part of the world.

Not, of course, that he had then known himself in this part of the world. That knowledge had only appeared later, as white names painted on blue signboards—LES ATTAQUES, ARDES, NORDAUSQUES, TILQUES. Till finally one name recalled a song, a silly old verse one's men used to sing as one marched them into rest billets after a show, a verse that went :—

*" If I'd fought this war from Saintomer,*
*I never would want to go home-er.*
*But war ain't so fine*
*Not up in the line,*
*And Wow ! I do want to go home."*

And while the words of that song were still singing in his mind, Ned Sanders had heard himself ask, " I say, that wasn't really St. Omer, was it ? " ; heard the lorry-driver reply, as they went hooting through the darkness beyond the town : " Well, there isn't another way from Cally to Wipers, is there ? Not unless you go round by Wallen and Lederzeele." And after that he had noticed no more white names on blue signboards : only the one name, " Wipers," branded in white fire on the blue screen-board of his brain.

Wipers ! The white name sorted his whole picture-jumble ; brought back Fleming ; brought back Lucy ; brought back terror ; revealed the truth—the bitter truth that he, Ned Sanders, a fugitive from English justice, had been crazy enough to jump an English lorry, to betray himself to the Law's pursuit.

## IV.

THEY were into Poperinghe, and six miles through it along the old road between the poplars, before Ned Sanders—his knees shaking—summoned up the courage to ask the lorry-driver his business, and, having heard that he was " carting stuff for the Menin Gate memorial," managed to thank him and get down.

The lorry, once he had got down, gathered speed again ; and watching its red tail lamp disappear, he again experienced some sensation of relief. Possibly he hadn't betrayed himself ; because twilight had been falling when he first encountered the lorry-man, and it had been quite dark long before they made Steenvoorde, pitch-dark and misty when the Belgian frontier-guard gave that perfunctory glance at his passport in the Customs office at Abeele.

But this time the sensation of relief only lasted a moment or so ; and that moment over, Ned Sanders fell to cursing himself for a fool. He *was* a fool, all the fools that God had ever put breath into. He ought never to have jumped that lorry. He ought to have made some plan when he got to Calais. He ought to be making some plan now.

But somehow or other his brain didn't feel capable of planning. It was as though somebody had doped that brain, as somebody had doped it long and long ago when he and Nick Fleming lay together, one above the other, and each of them groaning, on the wooden shelves of a Ford ambulance in Vlamertinghe. And even as that dope, so did this dope bring forgetfulness.

" Better be getting a move on," said that forgetfulness ; and presently Ned Sanders found himself foot-slogging between the old poplars in the wake of the lorry.

His feet seemed very heavy ; and because it was one of those beastly foggy nights when one never knew what was behind one, they kept him near the poplars, away from the centre of the road. Also, the fog was heavy, choking him ; so that he had to pull up and button the collar of his trench-coat to keep it out of his mouth. But presently, fog or no fog, he grew aware of lights.

The lights made him angry, because nobody but a fool ought to show lights there, at the cross-roads in Vlamertinghe, where two pals lay groaning in the same Ford. But long before he reached the cross-roads (Belgian peasants bed early !) the lights had been extinguished. Nor, because of the fog, could he detect any change in Vlamertinghe, except perhaps that the place looked somehow solider, and that one missed the traffic-control man with his, " They're crumping just beyond Goldfish, sir," as he touched his red hat.

So Ned Sanders passed the Vlamertinghe cross-roads, and foot-slogged on, still forgetful, and somehow convinced that he must have gone west after the morphia, and that this was the after-life some padre had jawed about in his dug-out on the Canal. A stout fellow, that padre ! Knew what he was talking about, too ! Nothing the matter with this after-life of his. Because, at any rate, it held no terrors, made one more or less safe.

The certainty that this after-life had made him safe grew on Ned Sanders as he marched deeper into the fog. No crumps were falling beyond Goldfish Château, you see. Nor—even in Wipers itself—could he hear a single gun firing across the night. "But they'll start again before stand-to," he caught himself muttering. "They're bound to start again before stand-to. So I'd better get a move on while there's still time." Whereupon he halted; and, pulling back the sleeve of his trench-coat to look at his radiolite wrist-watch, discovered that the watch wasn't there.

"The Ram Corps must have snaffled it," he argued. "Or perhaps the Colonel sent it home to Lucy after I went west."

The loss of his wrist-watch seemed to prove a good deal; and, marching on again, it appeared pretty rotten luck on Lucy that he should have gone west. Why on earth—while he was on earth—hadn't he married Lucy, instead of telling her "they'd better wait till he'd got through without being pipped." Lucy would have had a pension then. And now she wouldn't have anything—except that wrist-watch, if the Colonel had sent it home. Still, Lucy wouldn't mind so much—not if she knew how glad a fellow was to be "out of it"—"out of it" and safe. And in that strange conviction, somewhere about midnight, Ned Sanders came foot-slogging into Wipers itself.

IT struck him, immediately, that though this was Wipers itself, it couldn't be the old Wipers, but a new one, as it were a resurrection of that place which had put the wind up him in the past. It didn't smell like that old Wipers, to begin with; and there were still no shells falling, and no guns firing across the night. Also, somebody—God, perhaps?—had pieced a lot of its bricks together, made them into houses again, building them up. Possibly, though, new bricks had gone to the building-up of those houses, because once, when he stumbled against a wall, the surface of it felt just like his own new walls at *Mon Repos*, sharp against the hand.

Ned Sanders was stumbling a good deal by now, stumbling as men coming out of battle stumble, and trying his hardest, as men stumbling out of battle try their hardest, to keep awake. Damn it, he *must* keep awake until he got to his dug-out, next door to the padre's dug-out, on the Canal.

But the Canal eluded him; because he couldn't find the Water Tower, nor the road to the left of the Water Tower, and because nobody but an idiot would risk taking that other way to the dug-outs—the way from Brigade Headquarters, across the Square. And after a while he lost himself completely, till a low engine-whistle told of troops detraining; and lights, which had no more business there than they had at Vlamertinghe, gave him his bearings through the grey curtains of the fog.

The lights renewed anger in him; so did a second train-whistle louder than the first; and turning his back on the railway station, he stumbled on again, hurriedly, because one always hurried through Wipers when it was foggy, and 'planes had been signalled, and one happened to be alone.

For the train-whistle had disturbed his most satisfying conviction; so that he no longer felt himself in safety, being no longer quite dead. And because he was no longer quite dead, the lights of Skindle's Hotel seemed lights lit by lunatics; so that he shook his fist at those lights, and cursed the lunatics who had lit them with the old Army curses as he stumbled by.

But once beyond Skindle's—for by now it was midnight and the fog thickening and the rest of the town shuttered till the dawn—he saw no more lights, except an occasional street-lamp which he took for the aiming-lights of guns. And presently, all on a sudden, he found himself in the Square.

Here the fog seemed to be thinner; and looking up through the fog, he took his bearings from the Cloth Hall Tower. Somebody—as far as he could make out—had been trying to shore up the Cloth Hall Tower; and the Cathedral ruins beyond. Also, the Square itself felt strangely clean, smooth, and brickless, no shell-holes anywhere near his feet. But Ned Sanders didn't have time to notice much about the Square, because his feet urged him across it, just as they always had urged him across it in the old days when a man never knew how soon the next salvo would follow the last.

He had forgotten about the dug-out on the Canal by this time; and imagined himself with some message for Brigade Headquarters in the Ramparts by St. Martin's Church. He couldn't exactly remember the import of that message, though—his mind being now set on the drink of whisky they would give him at Headquarters, and speculative as to whether the Brigade Major would let him have an hour's sleep in the Ramparts before he went back up the line. Accordingly he cursed again when he couldn't find the path to St. Martin's Church because somebody had built a house across it; and very nearly collapsed with terror when, after feeling his way round the house in question, he realized himself at the Menin Gate.

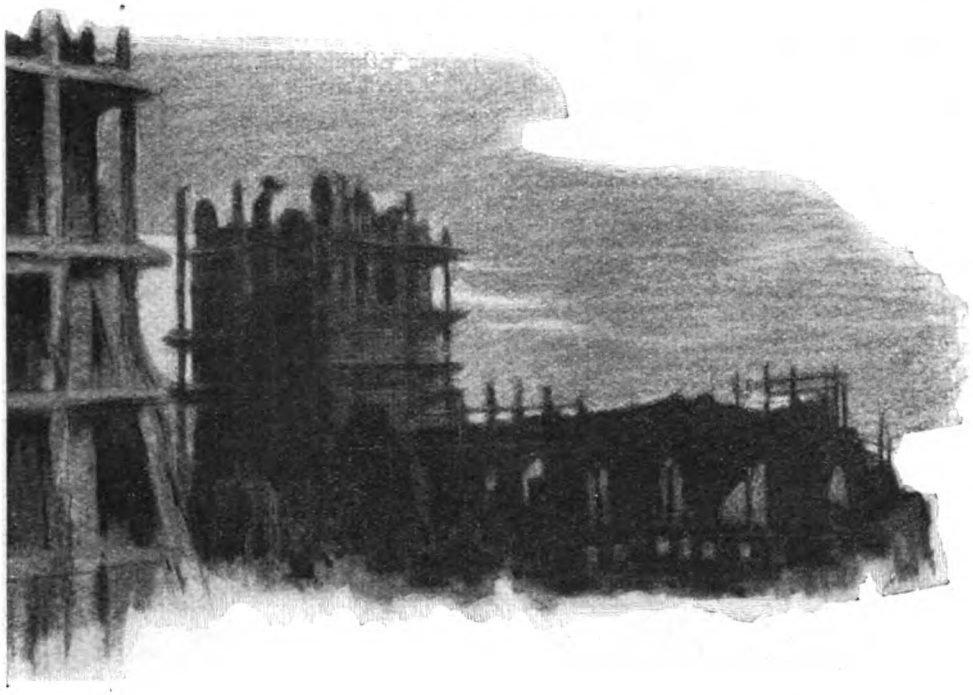
It struck him that though this was Wipers itself, it couldn't be the old Wipers.

There was no sentry on the Gate; only an empty lorry or so, and the usual mud. But once he had controlled his terror he noticed—most surprisedly—that they were building a pill-box there—an enormous pill-box, all steel pillars, and concrete, and stone.

"Jerry'll give this blazes when the fog lifts," he decided; and stumbled right-handed away from the half-built memorial, keeping well in the shelter of the Ramparts, till he found the church.

The outline of the restored church, as half-seen through the ground-fog, puzzled him terribly; yet not so terribly as the fact that somebody had bricked up the old burrow into the Ramparts; and for a good three minutes, almost as a fox at a stopped earth, he kept trying to find that old burrow, thrusting with his stick for it, panicked anew (because Jerry might start shelling at any moment) every time his stick found hard brickwork instead of the soft double gas-curtains which ought to have been there. Till, finally, still thrusting, he grew aware of horse-hoofs trotting slowly and doubtfully towards him through the fog.

The noise of the horse-hoofs came nearer, and in a second or so he saw two more lights. This time, however, the lights did not enrage him. He even felt rather glad about them, thinking they might help him to solve this mystery of the blocked Ramparts and the restored church. So, as first the horse and then the lights came abreast, he hailed them, shouting, "I say, I say, you with the ration-cart, can you tell me where the devil I am?" through the fog.



The lights halted to his shouting, and from between them a muffled melancholious voice answered in Flanders French.

"We seek the hospital," answered that voice. "I seek the hospital. Pray direct me to it, if you can."

"The hospital?" stammered back Ned Sanders, in the same language. "What hospital? I do not understand."

Followed silence; then the voice spoke again.

"Listen, *monsieur*. I have a soldier with me, a wounded soldier—*un soldat blessé*—and we seek the new hospital, but cannot find it on account of the fog."

"*Un soldat blessé?*" Ned Sanders' answer was hardly audible through his stammering lips.

"Yes, *monsieur*. *Un soldat blessé*. A Belgian soldier. *Un soldat Belge*. He is my nephew and *en congé* with us at the farm. To-night he wounds himself and the doctor tells me to bring him here. It is the hospital I seek, *monsieur*. The new hospital. But I have lost it in the fog." And after that, another voice chimed in from the interior of the old-fashioned carriage which was gradually becoming visible to Ned Sanders' eyes. "Do not distress yourself, uncle. I am not badly *blessé*. My arm has ceased hurting me. Let us not bother about the hospital but go back to the farm." And after that—because the memory of old days was still strong in him—Ned Sanders' hand went to his worn haversack, fumbled for and found his torch.

The torch-ray, switched dim to the interior of the carriage, showed a cap with a red tassel; under it, the face of a khaki-clad boy. The boy's face was smiling—yet sweat pearled it; and peering closer, Ned Sanders saw that his arm was in a clumsy sling.

"Queer," thought Ned Sanders. "Queer. They never did know how to make a sling out of their field-dressings"; and so thinking, felt for his own.

This time his hand no longer fumbled; nor, as he re-slung the arm, did he let any personal consideration distract him from his task. Only after he had done his task, only after he had guided the anxious farmer and his nephew far enough along the Ramparts for them to find their own way to hospital, did personal considerations begin to weigh with him, telling him that he wasn't dead after all, but only a fugitive—a fugitive from the English Law.

V.

IT must have been nearly one o'clock in the morning, with the fog lifting a little and the old chill wind playing across the flats of the Ypres Salient, when Ned Sanders finished his guiding of the farmer; nearly two before he took the old way out of the

Menin Gate and across the Canal. All that hour the boy's face had haunted him—and with it other faces, even the faces of his dead. But now he had done with those faces; now he had only one thought: to get out of this rebuilt Wipers; to get further into Belgium; to put all the miles of Belgium between him and those prison-bars, between him and the English Law.

Once over the Canal, that thought seemed cowardly; and once beyond the new buildings outside the Gate, he caught himself wondering whether he ought to go back to Lucy, confess to Lucy, not leave her to face the shock of his wrongdoing alone.

But that thought terrified him, just as the thought of Lucy always had terrified him in the days when he was going up the line; and by the time he made the road-fork the impulse to go back had disappeared. No! *He* wasn't going back to Lucy—nor to a prison cell—nor to bars. He, Ned Sanders, would rather go back to Hell Fire Corner, or the Hooge Crater, or even to Sanctuary Wood, than there.

And remembering Sanctuary Wood, there came to Ned Sanders memories of others—Railway Wood and Scottish, Polygon and Glencorse. Till presently—his brain painting him pictures of those woods, and of the deaths men had died in those woods, and of the older days when he himself had been entitled to call himself a man—the flight-impulse dwindled; and he started to wander—almost as the ghost of a dead man might wander—up and down and all about those new fields which are recompense of English blood.

The fog-bound fields puzzled him. So did the farms he sensed on them—and certain low walls of brickwork which seemed as though flanked with turf. And every now and then he imagined bulrushes, where he had never seen bulrushes, at the edge of the road. For always his wanderings brought him back to the road—to that Menin Road down which the ambulance had brought him, groaning and shivering to the bursting of the shells. And presently he came to a certain place.

That place, as the Square in Wipers, felt strangely mudless, strangely smooth under his feet. Yet he knew that place, because of the railway, because it was here (and here only) that the railway crossed the road. And in a minute or so, through a rift in the ground-fog, he saw a signboard, a yellow signboard lettered in black.

"Hell Fire Corner," he heard himself mutter. "So I hadn't forgotten." Then, still muttering, he turned left off the road again and tried for Railway Wood.

Railway Wood, however, though this also is signboarded by our League, and though he was within fifty yards of it before he gave up the chase, Ned Sanders could not find. Nor could he find Y Wood, nor Clapham Junction, only more farm-buildings and more of those bulrushes which have sprung—none knows how—from the sowing of the shells. All he could find—with the mist still man-deep above the bulrushes—was the semblance of a trench.

Somehow that trench seemed familiar; and presently, hugging it, he came—under the vaguest of vague dawn-glimmers—on another road.

That road was new to him; and following it doubtfully, he had several ideas about it: first that it must lead to Verbrandenmolen; then that he was circling back to Zillebeke, and finally that he must be heading for Blawpoort Farm. But the road led him to none of those places; and presently, halting on it, he grew aware of a great fear.

The great fear leaped at him suddenly from the roadside; and even as it leaped, he knew the meaning of it; knew himself nearing untilled ground. For there was a reek in that great fear—a reek of the old slime. And the great fear called to him that he should go down into that old slime, where no man has put plough yet, and the trenches are unfilled.

"No!" he heard himself mutter. "No." Yet presently he stepped off the road, gingerly, fearful of the soggy grass, the soggy water under his soles. The soggy grass tripped him; and things rustled in it; and once, flashing his torch down, he saw that the things were lizards; and once, flashing it upwards, he saw an obscene bird flit through the ghosts of the trees.

The ghosts of the trees mocked him. Shell-blasted they were; and leafless, and blackened with fire. And now, looking on those trees, stumbling among them, the great fear caught him by the midriff, turning his bowels to water, whispering to him, "Go back, Ned Sanders. For here are the unburied dead." But he could not go back, because the unburied dead, too, were whispering to him, whispering that he had put them to shame.

And after a while, still stumbling forward, he came on other trees, young and leafy—even on those slim maples which men who bled there have planted in Maple Copse. But Ned Sanders did not know that he was in Maple Copse; only that the unburied dead were still whispering to him, calling to him that he should leave those young maples and follow, follow deeper into the wood.

"I say, can you tell me where the devil I am?"

The dawn-glimmer was growing now; and almost he could see. And presently it seemed to him that he knew the name of this wood, and that the name of it was Sanctuary, Sanctuary for the Dead. But for him it could not be Sanctuary because he had put the dead to shame. And now, all on a sudden, the unburied dead ceased their whispering, and only the great fear whispered, "Don't you understand, Ned Sanders—don't you see how you have put them to shame?"

And even as that last whisper reached him, Ned Sanders, stumbling among the unfilled trenches, stumbled on that self-knowledge which is the outer hell. "Funking it," said self-knowledge. "Funking prison. You—who played a man's part out here."

VI.

NED SANDERS, who had once been Lieutenant Sanders, saw himself very clearly as the dawn came, grey and gusty through the blasted tree-trunks below Observatory Ridge. For even as dawn had blown away the ground-fog, so had it blown away the thought-fog from his fearful brain.

His brain was no longer fearful; nor was there any confusion in its pictures—in those pictures of old "shows," and old miseries, and old comrades who had called out to him in agony ere they died. Because in each of those pictures dwelt the same lesson, the same knowledge that, even for Lucy's sake, he must take his medicine, even should that medicine mean a dose of jail.

"What's prison," he thought, "compared with *their* miseries, compared with the agony

*they* knew before they died"; and so thinking, started to make his way back out of the wood.

Once the thought of Lucy's misery halted him, and once the thought of Fleming's anger when *he* knew. But it didn't really matter about Fleming, nor even about Lucy. Because nothing mattered now, except not funking it, except not shaming his own dead.

So Ned Sanders stumbled on over the unfilled trenches, till he made the young maples, till he made the strange road; and once on to that road he stumbled no longer, but swung forward, head high, with a soldier's step.

The sun was up ere he reached Hell Fire Corner, and the dawn-wind had ceased its blowing. All about him lay the New Salient—new farm-buildings, new churches, new fields. Men had cleared those fields for the ploughing; so that everywhere his eyes gave him peace-pictures—smoke rising from chimneys, and cattle at water, and horses harnessing to take men and women to Mass. And beyond these pictures shimmered the New Ypres—that resurrection of Wipers which no deity, but he and his dead comrades, had builded with their blood.

**Presently it seemed to him that he knew the name of this wood, and that the name of it was Sanctuary, Sanctuary for the Dead.**

But Ned Sanders did not stop to salute any of those comrades; though thousands lay here, in the new burial-places, with the sworded cross above them, behind those low walls that are banked with the green turf of England, and limned with the English legend, "Their name liveth for evermore." Those comrades, he knew, would understand him; see that he was not slighting them; even though he must hurry away from them, hurry home through the Menin Gate.

For this was Sunday morning, and he, Ned Sanders, must be home by Sunday night. His dead comrades would understand how much *that* mattered; how vital it was that he should be in the office on Monday morning, and not wait for the auditors, but make a clean breast of things to that other living comrade, to the man who had been "our Major" and their friend.

"Oh, yes, they'll understand," the bells told him—all the Mass-bells of this resurrected Wipers, St. Martin's Church among them—as he hurried through the Gate.

# "Days of My Life"

## By

# H. RIDER HAGGARD

## IV. (*continued*)—"KING SOLOMON'S MINES."

My correspondence with Robert Louis Stevenson—Encouragement and criticism—An unpublished poem by R. L. S.—"King Solomon's Mines" brings me many curious letters.

AMONG the many letters that I received about "King Solomon's Mines," perhaps the most interesting that I can find were from Robert Louis Stevenson. The first of these, undated as they all are, is written from Skerryvore, Bournemouth, where he was living at the time. Here I should state that to my sorrow I never met Stevenson face to face; always we just missed each other.

"DEAR SIR,

"Some kind hand has sent me your tale of Solomon's Mines; I know not who did this good thing to me; and so I send my gratitude to headquarters and the fountain head. You should be more careful; you do quite well enough to take more trouble, and some parts of your book are infinitely beneath you. But I find there flashes of a fine weird imagination and a fine poetic use and command of the savage way of talking: things which both thrilled me. The reflections of your hero before the battle are singularly fine; the King's song of victory a very noble imitation. But how, in the name of literature, could you mistake some lines from Scott's 'Marmion'—aye, and some of the best—for the slack-sided, clerical-cob effusions of the Rev. Ingoldsby? Barham is very good, but Walter Scott is vastly better.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obliged reader,

"ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON."

Of course I answered Stevenson's letter—by the way, I have not the least idea who sent him the book—thanking him and pointing out that he had overlooked the fact that Allan Quatermain's habit of attributing sundry quotations to the Old Testament and the Ingoldsby Legends, the only books with which he was familiar, was a literary joke.

Stevenson wrote back, again in an undated letter from Bournemouth and on a piece of manuscript paper:—

"DEAR MR. HAGGARD,

"Well, yes, I have sinned against you; that was the part of a bad reader. But it inclines me the more to explain my dark saying. As thus:

"You rise in the course of your book to pages of eloquence and poetry; and it is quite true that you must rise from something lower; and that the beginning must infallibly (?) be pitched low and kept quiet. But you began (pardon me the word) slipshod. If you are to rise, you must prepare the mind in the quiet parts, with at least an accomplished neatness. To this you could easily attain. In other words, what you have still to learn is to take trouble with those parts which do not excite you.

"Excuse the tone of a damned schoolmaster, and believe me,

"Yours truly,

"ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON."

The next letter, also from Skerryvore, Bournemouth, which because of its allusions to "King Solomon's Mines," although undated, must have been written at this time, is an enigma to me. I have not the faintest idea to what it refers.

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"DEAR MR. HAGGARD,

"Is it not possible to make a gratuitous donation *inter vivos?* Could not that be done in a separate instrument? I know not if it matters; but if there were any ready way of gaining the point, I might adopt it. My law is all to the wind; and indeed I never knew but a taste.

"I thank you at least for the remark.

"I come rarely to town, and am usually damned sick when I do. But if I can, I'll try to see you. (I know a cousin of yours here, by the way.)

"What are you about? I am again at a boys' story; but I've been a year at it already and may be longer.

"Yours very truly,

"R. L. STEVENSON.

"P.S.—Further reflection on 'K.S.M.' makes me think you are one who gets up steam slowly. In that case, when you have your book finished, go back and re-write the beginning up to the mark.

"My case is the reverse: I always begin well, and often finish languidly or hurriedly.

"P.P.S.—How about a deed of partnership?"

This "deed of partnership" on the face of it would seem to suggest some scheme of collaboration. Yet I do not think that this could have been the case. For the following reason. I remember that my late brother, Bazett, who was afterwards an intimate friend of Stevenson's in Samoa, told me that someone, I know not who, had written to him suggesting that he and I should collaborate in a story, and that he had returned an angry and offensive answer to the suggestion, as I dare say it was quite natural that he should do. This answer, it seems, had, however, weighed upon his mind. At any rate, Bazett informed me that Stevenson on several occasions spoke to him with deep regret as to his petulant reply. This is all I know, or at any rate all that I can recollect of the matter. Yet what else can have been referred to in the above letter I am at a loss to guess.

STEVENSON'S remark as to his finishing languidly is interesting, and, so far as my judgment goes, his romantic work shows its truth. Thus to my fancy the first part of "Treasure Island" is far and away better than its end. In an adventure story what is called style, however brilliant, is not enough; the living interest must be kept up to the last page; it should increase to the very end. Of course I know that many of our critics, like those of Alexandria in the first centuries of our era, think and preach that style is the really important thing, much more important than the substance of the story. I cannot believe that they are right. The substance is, as it were, the soul of the matter; the style is its outward and visible body. I prefer a creation with a great soul, even if its form is somewhat marred, to one with a beautifully finished form and very little soul. Of course, when the two are found together, a rare event, there is perfection. Also people differ in their ideas of what style really is. By it some understand inverted sentences, unusual words, and far-fetched metaphors or allusions, making up a whole that it is difficult to comprehend. Others hold that the greater the simplicity of the language the better the style. I am not an authority, but my own view is that above all things the written word should be clear and absolutely readable, and that work which does not fulfil these conditions can scarcely be expected to endure. It runs a grave risk of passing with the fashion of the hour. To take a single instance, the English version of the Old Testament, considered as literature, seems to me to fulfil all the requisites of good writing—in fact, to be style in the truest sense. Yet the meaning remains perfectly clear, and were those books to cease to be studied for their religious contents, they would still always be read as a model of plain and vigorous English.

But to return to Stevenson. Here I will add the last letter save one that I received from him, though again I do not know to what it refers, since the enclosure of which he speaks is missing, or at any rate has not been found at present. Like the others, it is undated, but the allusion to "Nada the Lily" shows that it must have been written at the beginning of 1892.

"Vailima Plantation,
Samoan Island.

"RIDER HAGGARD, ESQ.

"Dear Haggard,—

"In cleaning up the hideous mess which accumulates about the man of letters I came on the enclosed sheet. Its filthiness will indicate its age. But there is internal evidence which to me dates it still further back; and that is the reference to your brother Bazett. I now know him well and regard him with the most sincere and lively affection and respect. Indeed, we are companions in arms, and have helped each other back and forth in some very difficult and some very annoying affairs. This has given a wonderful jog to my sense of intimacy with yourself, until I

begin to have a difficulty in remembering that I have never seen you. Two remarks and I leave my filthy enclosure to speak for itself. First—the equations on the fly-leaf were not in the least intended for you; they're pieces of a lesson in the Samoan language and you must kindly regard them as non-existent. Second, 'Nada the Lily' is A1.

"Sincerely yours,

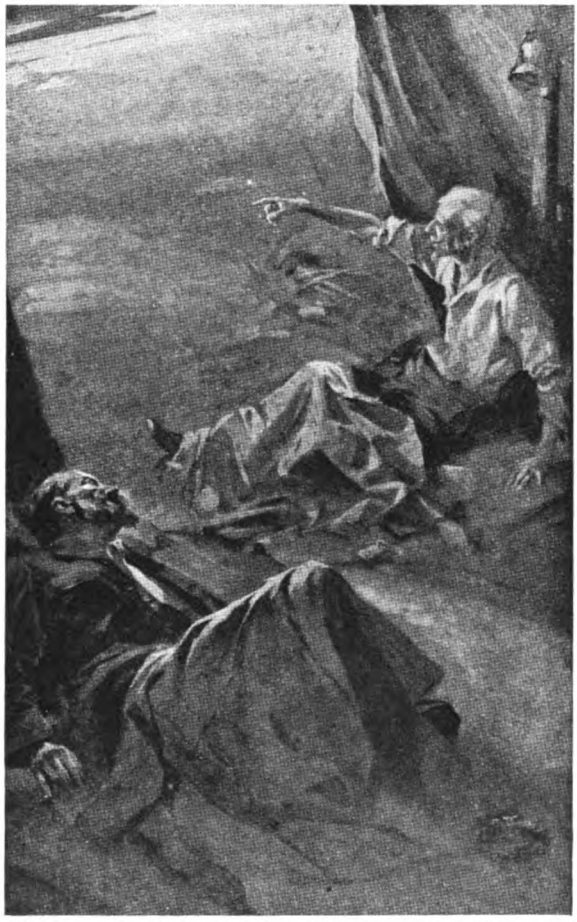
"ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON."

I only wish I could find the filthy enclosure, or at least remember with what it had to do.

I have one more allusion to my brother besides the letter which came to me with "The Man Haggard." It is written on a little triangular bit of foolscap pinned into the manuscript of "Nada the Lily." I suppose that Lang must have sent it to me.

"If you see Haggard, tell him we have a great affection for his brother. Our home rejoices when we see him coming: and that Chaka mourning for his mother is great."

Here is this last letter pinned into the first of the two accompanying, parchment-bound volumes, that which is entitled "An Object of Pity; or The Man Haggard. A Romance. By Many Competent Hands. Imprinted at Amsterdam." These volumes were sent to me by Stevenson in July, 1893.



"There it is!" cried the dying man, "but I shall never reach it, never."

A dramatic scene from "King Solomon's Mines."

*By permission of Messrs. Cassell & Co., Ltd.*

"Tivoli Hotel,

Apia, Samoa, South Paci.

"DEAR RIDER HAGGARD,—

"I send you herewith a couple of small (and, so to speak, indecent) volumes in which your brother and I have been indulging in the juvenile sport of shying bricks at each other. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, say I. And I hope you will say the same. We were a large party, with nothing to do—Lady Jersey, my wife, Captain Leigh, your brother and I, and Mrs. Strong, my daughter-in-law—and that which we wrote was not according to wisdom. I have heard some of yours called in question for steepness; here is your revenge.

"Yours very truly,

"ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON."

The companion volume is entitled "Objects of Pity; or, Self and Company. By a Gentleman of Quality. Imprinted at Amsterdam." It is corrected throughout in my brother Bazett's handwriting. I should judge that it went to press without his having the advantage of seeing proofs.

Pinned to the title-page is the following letter to me from Bazett:—

"Apia, Samoa.

July 17th, 1893.

"DEAR RIDER,—

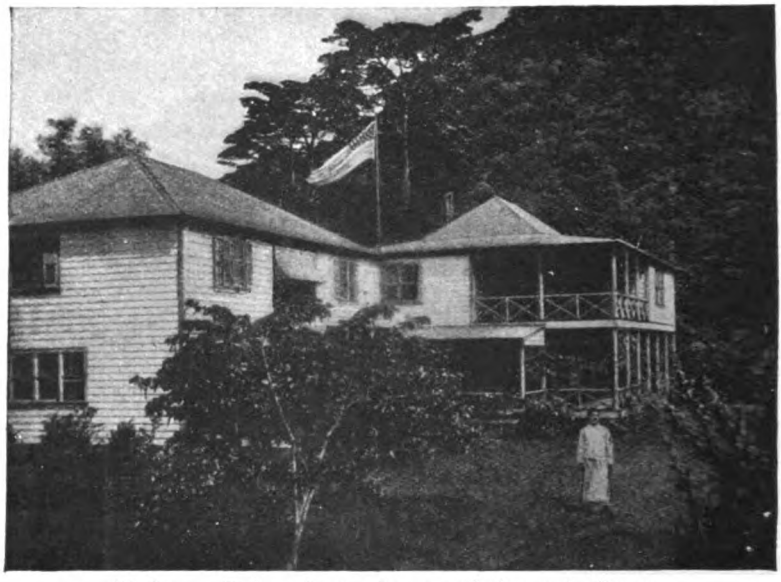
"Enclosed letter from R. L. Stevn. speaks for itself. He says we 'all had nothing to do.' He is wrong there. *They* wrote the 'Object of Pity' on the days I was at work at Comn. I did not write my letter till 3 (word illegible) after, when Stevenson insisted on having it printed and took it to Sydney and had it printed. I was riled at being called 'an object of Pity' *rather*, so set to and gave them a Roland for their Oliver.

"We have had a very bad time here. I have seen sights of 'the French Revolution'—heads carried about in the streets with yells and shouts—wounded and dead carried along. Also a beastly bloody axe which decapitated 'young Mataafa' shoved under my nose to admire and adore. I told my friend 'Safolu' to take his beastly thing away and he seemed quite surprised. . . . These books are R. L. S.'s gift to you—write him a line. . . .

"Your loving brother,

"BAZETT M. HAGGARD.

"Stevenson and I are great friends; he is such a good chap, but *as* I say of him in my book."



**Vailima—Robert Louis Stevenson's home in Samoa.**

*By permission of "The Bookman."*

As regards the volumes themselves, which seem to fetch a great deal of money when they come on the market, I am only able to say that I have studied them with zeal, but am unable to make head or tail of them. Perhaps this is because I do not possess the key to the joke or understand the local allusions.

I have only one more relic of Stevenson, a very amusing poem which he wrote to Lang and myself on "The World's Desire," or rather a copy of it, for I believe that Lang lost the original. Here it is:—

1.

"Awdawcious Odyshes,
Your conduc' is vicious,
Your tale is suspicious
An' queer.
Ye ancient sea-roamer,
Ye dour auld beach-comber,
Frae Haggard to Homer
Ye veer.

2.

Sic veerin' and steerin'!
What port are ye neerin'
As frae Egypt to Erin
Ye gang?
Ye ancient auld blackguard,
Just see whaur ye're staggered
From Homer to Haggard
And Lang!

3.

In stunt and in strife
To gang seeking a wife—
At your time o' life
It was wrang.

An' see! Fresh afflictions
Into Haggard's descriptions
An' the plagues o' the Egyptians
Ye sprang!

4.

The folk ye're now in wi'
Are ill to begin wi'
Or to risk a hale skin wi'
In breeks—

They're blacker and hetter—
(Just ask your begetter)
And far frae bein' better
Than Greeks.

5.
Ther's your *Meriamun*,
She'll mebbe can gammon
That auld—furrand salmon
Yoursel'.

An' *Moses* and *Aaron*
Will gie ye your fairin'
Wi' fire an' het airn
In Hell.

"I refuse to continue longer. I had an excellent half verse there, but couldn't get the necessary pendant, and anyway there's no end to such truck.

"Yours,

"R. L. S."

Again I must express my sorrow that I never saw Stevenson. Evidently he was a delightful man and as brilliant as he was charming; truly a master of his craft. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" has always seemed to me one of the most remarkable things of its sort in the English language. Longman gave me an early copy of it just after it was issued from the press, and this I still possess somewhere. I shall never forget the thrill with which I read the story; in places the horror of it is enough to cause the hair to rise. His essays, too, are almost unmatched, at any rate in our time, and next to these I should put "The Master of Ballantrae." At least, such is my individual taste.

About "King Solomon's Mines" I have only this to add. In it I made a mistake with reference to an eclipse, which brought me into much trouble with astronomers, and also with numbers of the reading public who hurried to expose my ignorance. In a subsequent edition I rectified the mistake, but that produced more trouble, since students of the work had violent arguments between themselves, each quoting the versions that they had read, and wrote to me to settle their disputes. I have always found the movements of the heavenly bodies very ticklish things to touch. Whatever one says about the moon, for instance, is pretty sure to be wrong.

I may say this further, that no book that I have written seems to have conveyed a greater idea of reality. At this moment I hold in my hand at least a dozen letters sorted from what I call "Unknown Correspondents," by which I mean communications received from individuals with whom I have no personal acquaintance. Every one of the writers of these epistles is anxious to know whether or not the work is a record of fact. Even the great dealer in precious stones, the late Mr. Streeter, approached me on the subject. I believe he actually sent an expedition to look for King Solomon's Mines, or at any rate talked of doing so. Nor was he so far out in his reckoning, for since that day they have been discovered—more or less. At any rate, Rhodesia has been discovered, which is a land full of gems and gold, the same land, I believe, as that whence King Solomon did actually draw his wealth. Also Queen Sheba's Breasts have been found, or something very like to them, and traces of the great road that I describe. Doubtless I heard faint rumours of these things during my sojourn in Africa, having made it my habit through life to keep my ears open. But at the best they were *very* faint. The remainder I imagined, and imagination has often proved to be the precursor of the truth. The mines of Kukuana Land, *alias* Rhodesia, are destined to produce much more treasure than ever Solomon or the Phœnicians won out of them. Who built the vast Zimbabwe and other temples or fortresses? Some ridiculous scientist has alleged within the last few years that these were reared by the Portuguese at the time that those very Portuguese were talking of them as the work of the devil or ancient magicians in an unknown age. The thing

R. L. S.

*This portrait is reproduced from "The Vailima Letters" by permission of Messrs. Methuen & Co.*

is absurd. Those edifices are the relics of a lost civilization which worshipped the Nature gods. Who they were, what they were, we do not and perhaps never shall know.

A girls' school, or some members of it, evidently weary of the society of their own sex, wrote congratulating me with great earnestness because I had in "King Solomon's Mines" produced a thrilling book "without a heroine."

Truly in those days my industry was great. While on my summer holiday in 1885 I wrote "Allan Quatermain," the sequel to "King Solomon's Mines," from the first word to the last, although it did not appear until about a couple of years later, after it had run through *Longman's Magazine*.

On my return to town in the late autumn I began a novel of a very different style, which was afterwards published under the name of "Jess." The manuscript of "Jess" does not state the date of its commencement, but at the end appears the date of 31st December, 1885, showing that it was finished on that day. This book I wrote for the most part in the chambers I shared at 1, Elm Court, upon an old teak table with a leather top. This table, which I bought of a second-hand dealer, had evidently begun life in some ship where the cabins were low, for it was so short in the legs that until they were heightened in some way it used to make my back ache to write at it.

Whenever I was not engaged in Court, where I hung about a great deal and even for a while reported Divorce and Probate cases for *The Times* on behalf of that journal's regular reporter, an old barrister named Kelly, when he was absent on a holiday, I sat at this table in the dingy room at 1, Elm Court, and toiled at "Jess." Sometimes this was no easy task, since young barristers of my acquaintance with time upon their hands would enter and scoff at my literary labours. In the evening I placed what I had written in a kind of American cloth music-roll, which either my wife or Miss Barber made for me, and carried it home to West Kensington, so that I might continue my work after dinner. In fact, there were two of these rolls. The first of them I lost on my homeward way, I know not how or where. It contained about a dozen foolscap sheets of closely-written manuscript of one of the most important parts of the book, that which, amongst other things, describes the character of Frank Muller and how, after he had attempted the murder of Neal and Jess in the Vaal River, he galloped away pursued by his own terrors. I remember that I was much distressed at this loss, thinking that what I had written was the best thing I had ever done. I waited awhile hoping that the address written within the case might bring it back to me. But it never did. So I re-wrote the missing sheets from memory, which has never been my strong point. I wonder whether they are better or worse than those that had departed?

## V.—"SHE."

Written at white heat in little more than six weeks—A great success as a serial and in book form—"The most extraordinary romance I ever read"—"She" one of the first novels published at six shillings.

SO soon as "Jess," of which I shall speak more hereafter, was finished, or rather about a month later, I began another tale which the world knows as "She." The exact date of its commencement is uncertain, for it has been obliterated by a clip that fastened the manuscript together, and all that remains is Feb./86. At the end, however, is inscribed "Finished 18th March, 1886." Therefore, even supposing that it was begun upon the 1st February, which would mean that I had allowed myself a month's rest after finishing "Jess," the whole romance was completed in a little over six weeks. Moreover, it was never re-written and the manuscript carries but few corrections. The fact is that it was written at white heat, almost without rest, and that is the best way to compose.

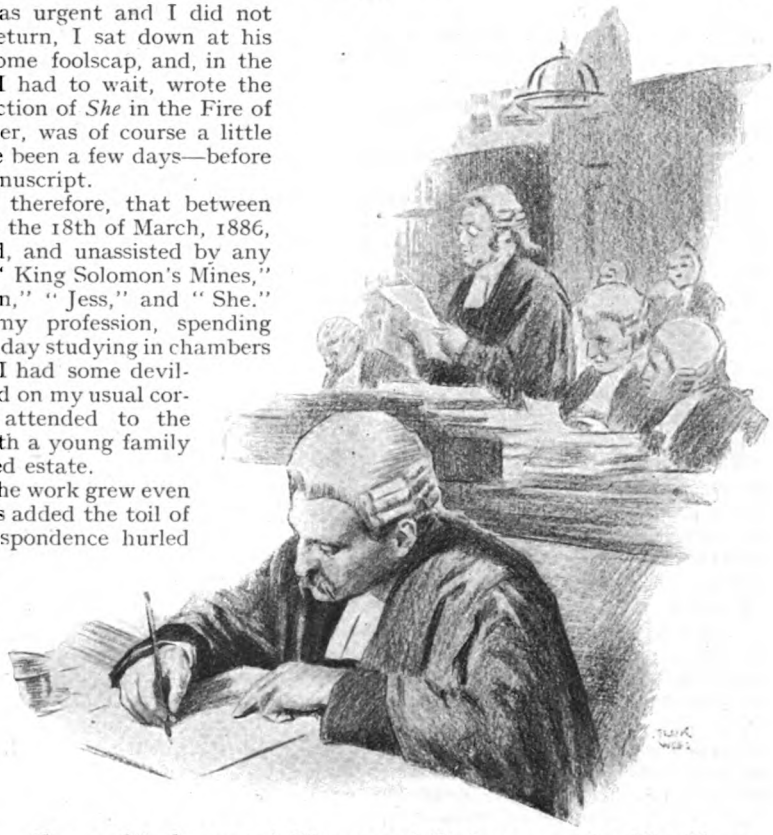
I remember that when I sat down to the task my ideas as to its development were of the vaguest. The only clear notion that I had in my head was that of an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love. All the rest shaped itself round this figure. And it came, it came faster than my poor aching hand could set it down. Well do I recall taking the completed manuscript to the office of my literary agent, Mr. A. P. Watt, and throwing it on the table with the remark: "There is what I shall be remembered by."

Well do I recall also visiting Mr. Watt on another occasion and finding him out.

As the business was urgent and I did not wish to have to return, I sat down at his table, asked for some foolscap, and, in the hour or two that I had to wait, wrote the scene of the destruction of *She* in the Fire of Life. This, however, was of course a little while—it may have been a few days—before I delivered the manuscript.

It would seem, therefore, that between January, 1885, and the 18th of March, 1886, with my own hand, and unassisted by any secretary, I wrote "King Solomon's Mines," "Allan Quatermain," "Jess," and "She." Also I followed my profession, spending many hours of each day studying in chambers or in Court, where I had some devilling practice, carried on my usual correspondence, and attended to the affairs of a man with a young family and a certain landed estate.

A little later on the work grew even harder, for to it was added the toil of an enormous correspondence hurled at me by every kind of person from all over the earth. If I may judge by those which remain, marked with the letter A for "answered," I seem to have done my best to reply to all these scribes, hundreds of them, even down to the autograph-hunter, a task which must have taken up a good part of every day, and this in addition to all my other work. No wonder that my health began to give out at last, goaded as I was at that period of my life by constant and venomous attacks.



**For a while I reported Divorce and Probate cases for *The Times*.**

When "She" was in proof for serial publication in *The Graphic* I showed it to Andrew Lang. He writes to me on July 12th, 1886: "I have pretty nearly finished 'She.' I really must congratulate you. I think it is one of the most astonishing romances I ever read. The more impossible it is, the better you do it, till it seems like a story from the literature of another planet. I can't give a better account of the extraordinary impression it makes upon me; as to the Public I never can speak."

Then he makes some criticisms of the style, the comic element and the horrors, and ends with a P.S., "I know I sha'n't sleep."

On the 25th of the same month Lang writes again: "I have just finished 'She'; previously I skipped a bit to get to the end. I certainly still think it the most extraordinary romance I ever read, and that's why I want you to be very careful with the proofs, before it goes out in a volume. . . . I nearly cried over Ayesha's end. But how did she come to Kôr? There is a difficulty about Leo. He is not made a very interesting person. Probably he was only a fine animal. Anyhow, that can't be helped now, and never could perhaps. I dare say Kallikrates was no better. But some of the chaff in awful situations lets one down too suddenly. I'd take other fellows' advice about it, in some of the marked places. I hope they find She in Thibet, and all die together." (They did, practically, twenty years later; see 'Ayesha.'—H. R. H.) "By George, I'd have gone into the fire and chucked in She too; perhaps it would have picked her up again."

In another letter he says: "It is awfully good of you to think of putting my name in 'She,' and I consider it a great distinction. The only thing is that, if you do, I sha'n't be able to review it, except with my name signed thereto and my honest confession. Probably I could do that in *The Academy*. It is rather curious (plagiarism on your side again) that I was going to ask you to let me dedicate my little volume of tales 'That Missionary,' etc., to you."

I may say here that Lang did review "She" in *The Academy* over his own name, but, I am almost sure, nowhere else, although I believe he was accused of having written a dozen or more notices of this work, and that he did dedicate "In the Wrong Paradise" to me in very charming language.

Having run through *The Graphic*, where it attracted a good deal of attention, "She" appeared as a six-shilling volume, I think the first, or one of the first novels that was published in that form, some time in December, 1886. It was brought out by Messrs. Longmans and very well got up, the elaborate sherd compounded by my sister-in-law, then Miss Barber, and myself being reproduced in two plates at the beginning of the volume. The illustrations by Messrs. Greiffenhagen and Kerr were, however, added afterwards. By the way, the reproduction of this sherd was shown, as being from a genuine antique, to Mr., afterwards Sir John, Evans, who of course was a great expert on such matters. For a long while he peered at it through his eyeglasses, and at last put it down, remarking:—

"All I can say is that it might *possibly* have been forged," which I consider great testimony to the excellency of the sherd, which now reposes in a cupboard upstairs.*

The title "She," if I remember aright, was taken from a certain rag doll, so-named, which a nurse at Bradenham used to bring out of some dark recess in order to terrify those of my brothers and sisters who were in her charge.

"SHE" proved a great and immediate success, and I received many letters, of which I will quote one from Sir Walter Besant, and one from Mr., now Sir Edmund, Gosse.

"Jan. 2, 1887,
12, Gayton Crescent,
Hampstead.

"MY DEAR HAGGARD,

"While I am under the spell of 'Ayesha,' which I have only just finished, I must write to congratulate you upon a work which most certainly puts you at the head—a long way ahead—of all contemporary imaginative writers. If fiction is best cultivated in the field of pure invention, then you are certainly the first of modern novelists. 'Solomon's Mines' is left far behind. It is not only the central conception that is so splendid in its audacity, but it is your logical and pitiless working out of the whole thing in its inevitable details that strikes me with astonishment.

"I do not know what the critics will say about it. Probably they will not read more than they can help, and then will let you off with a few general expressions. If the critic is a woman she will put down this book with the remark that it is impossible—almost all women have this feeling towards the marvellous.

"Whatever else you do, you will have 'She' always behind you for purposes of odious comparison. And whatever critics say, the book is bound to be a magnificent success. Also it will produce a crop of imitators. And all the little conventional story-tellers will be jogged out of their grooves—until they find new ones.

"Yours very sincerely,
"WALTER BESANT."

Certainly Besant was quite right when he said that I should always have "She" behind me "for purposes of odious comparison." I always have. Quite a large proportion of my critics during many years have mentioned in the course of their reviews of various works from my pen that the one under consideration is not another "She," or words to that effect. As though a man's brain could harbour a host of "Shes"! Such literary polygamy is not possible. Only one love of this kind is given to him.

"29, Delamere Terrace,
8/1/87.

"MY DEAR MR. RIDER HAGGARD,

"I feel constrained to write again to you about 'She' before the impression the book has made upon my mind in any degree wears off. In construction I think you have been successful to a very marvellous degree. The quality of the invention increases as you go on, and the latest chapters are the best. Indeed, it does not appear to me that I have ever been thrilled and terrified by any literature as I have by pp. 271-306 of 'She.'. It is simply unsurpassable.

"All through the book there are points which I have noted for the highest praise: the three white fingers on Ustane's hair, the dream about the skeletons, the meeting of the Living and the Dead, the Statue of Truth—these are only a few of the really marvellous things that the book contains. I was a great admirer and, as you know, a warm welcomer of 'King Solomon's Mines,' but I confess that exceedingly picturesque and ingenious book did not prepare me for 'She'; and I do not know what to say, of hope or fear, about any future book of adventure of yours. I don't know what is to be imagined beyond the death of Ayesha.

"Accept again my thanks for the gift of your book, which I put among my

* It is now in Norwich Museum, with the original MS. of most of Sir Rider's tales.—ED.

treasures, and now the expression of my sincere and cordial admiration.

"Yours most truly,

"EDMUND GOSSE.

"P.S.—May I say, without impertinence, I think the *style* strikes me as a vast improvement upon that of 'K.S.M.'?"

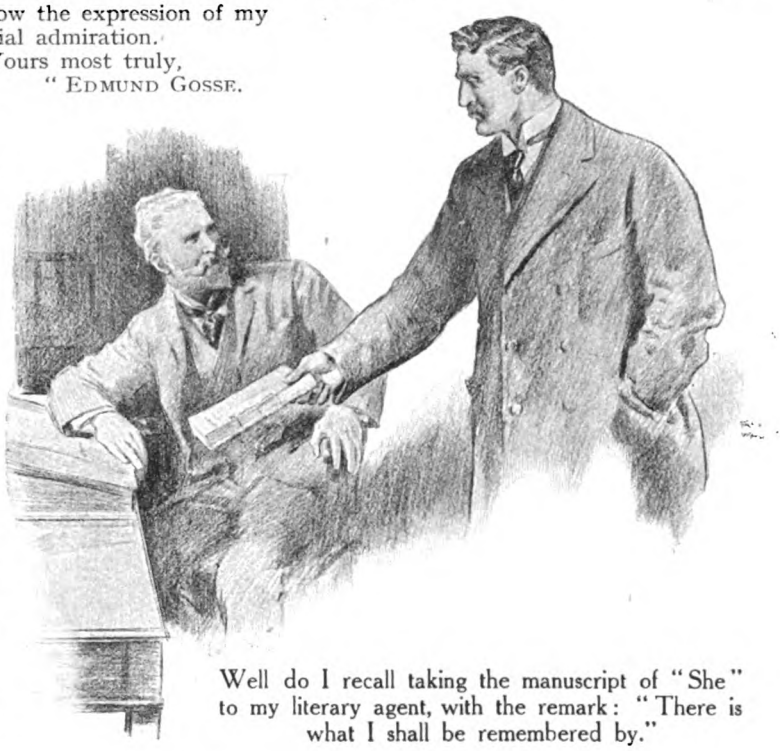
To turn to something humorous, I find the following in the handwriting of the late Rev. W. J. Loftie, headed "SHE" in large letters:—

"Are you acquainted with the story of the lady who wrote poetry? She had begun an epic:—

"'Man was made innocent and good, but he——'

when a visitor called. She left the paper on the table; the visitor came in, waited a little, and departed. When she returned she found the couplet completed:—

"'Man was made innocent and good,
but he—
Would doubtless have continued so—
but SHE!'"



Well do I recall taking the manuscript of "She" to my literary agent, with the remark: "There is what I shall be remembered by."

Well, "She" came out and was a great success. On March 15th Charles Longman wrote to me in Egypt: "I am glad to tell you that 'She' keeps on selling capitally. We have printed twenty-five thousand already, and have ordered another five thousand, and I do not think we shall have many left when the printers deliver them. . . . Last week we sold over one thousand copies!"

This was a large number as books sold in those days, when people were not accustomed to buying novels in one volume, having been in the habit of borrowing them from the library in three. Moreover, from that day to this the sale of "She" has never ceased, whilst in America it was pirated by the hundred thousand.

All the reviews of it were not good; indeed, some of them attacked it strongly. Others, however, were enthusiastic. *The Times* (a review in *The Times* then, before the days of Literary Supplements, if good, was very valuable) spoke extremely well of it. *The Times* reviewer, however, criticized the Greek upon the sherd. Had he known that it was translated by Dr. Holden, one of the best Greek scholars of the day, he might have preferred to leave it unquestioned. Here is the doctor's letter on the subject, written from the Athenæum, in March, 1886:—

"DEAR HAGGARD,

"Your task is not quite so big as one of the labours of Hercules, but by no means easy without further data. Do you want the Greek to be such as to deceive the learned world into thinking that it is no forgery, but a genuine bit of antiquity? If so, the *style* will have to be taken into account; it won't do to imitate Herodotus, though it is just the bit suitable for his style, because of the date B.C.200.

"Anyhow, I am just going down to Harrow to examine the Sixth Form for Scholarships; and shall be fully occupied there for a fortnight. I hope, therefore, you are not in any particular hurry; if so, I must return you your MS., which I cannot do justice to without some further consideration of the subject.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. A. HOLDEN."

"Behold now, let the Dead and Living meet!"
**Every reader of "She" will recall this famous scene.**
*By permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.*

That my old master did consider it very thoroughly I know for a fact. I remember his telling me that he would have liked to be able to give six months to study before he ventured on this particular piece of Greek. I said that with all his great learning this was surely unnecessary.

"My dear boy," he answered, "I have been soaking myself in the classics for over forty years, and I am just beginning to learn how little I know about them!"

Twenty years later, the time that I had always meant to elapse, I wrote a sequel under the title of "Ayesha, or The Return of She."

Of the scores of letters which I received about "She" from correspondents personally unknown to me, the following is perhaps one of the most curious. It is written from the Electric-Technical Factory of Messrs. Ganz and Co., Buda-Pesth :—

"DEAR SIR,

"In explanation of the following lines, please to learn that during the course of the last few weeks we, whose signatures you will find adjoined, have had the pleasure of reading your celebrated novel, 'She.'

"Despite our various tastes, characters, and nationalities we have, one and all, taken a most lively interest in your story.

"It appears that each of us found in it a something which appealed to his sympathies; to one the ethnographical and topographical descriptions may have given satisfaction; to another, the frequently occurring remembrances of athletic sports; in a third, perhaps, sweet memories of bygone classical studies have been awakened.

"The last time we dined in company it was decided that we should proffer you, in humble acknowledgment of our respect and thanks, our united most hearty good wishes for your happiness, contentment, and general well-being, with the hope that you may be spared to enrich your fellow-creatures and coming generations with the fair products of your fertile mind.

"We beg you, dear Sir, to believe us

"Yours faithfully,

"A. DAMEK, CRAWFORD, C. HORTSEK,
German. Scotchman. Englishman.
S. JORDAN E. POESETZLIN, L. STARK,
Frenchman. Swiss. Hungarian.
"Electrical Engineers."

This, I think, was a very satisfactory letter for an author to receive.

*(Next month Sir Rider Haggard describes his first visit to Egypt, where he had several exciting experiences, and the writing of "Cleopatra," one of his most famous romances. He also has much to say of "Allan Quatermain" and of that immortal character Umslopogaas.)*

# "ORPHAN ANNIE"

by

# ALBERT KINROSS

*ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD*

SOME men are born great, others achieve greatness, while others simply have it put into their hand, says the Bard. Ivan Blakeway was one of the last, and his is a peculiar story. It begins with famine, it passes on to fraud, it finishes with fame and a five-figure income.

Two years ago Ivan Blakeway was on his uppers. The big firm which employed him had amalgamated with a still bigger firm; it meant less overhead charges and, therefore, a more economic way of doing the same amount of business; but, as far as Ivan was concerned, it meant the sack, the whole sack, and nothing but the sack. He and thirteen other clerks were given a month's notice or a month's wages. It depended.

Ivan was given a month's wages. He sought other and even worse jobs in a congested labour market, but it was all N.G. Ivan was good-looking, ridiculously good-looking, with a natural Marcel wave in his beautiful golden hair; he was tall, well-set-up, and he could add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Also he could read and write. None of these varied and brilliant accomplishments seemed to be in any great demand.

In six weeks he had been reduced to that horrible condition wherein a young man begins to develop a vivid imagination. For instance, tramping these stony streets, he would picture his old pal Harrison coming towards him; and next, Harrison would say: "What, out of a job? I know someone who'd jump at a chap like you; six quid a week to begin with." He had no old pals, Harrison or otherwise; he was beginning to invent them. Or, again, looking up at the dome of St. Paul's, which the newspapers said was a bit shaky, he would think that if it came down with a bang on top of his head it would save him a peck of trouble. He went once and stood under it to see.

Ivan had reached the stage where he owed money at his lodgings and had only a sixpenny-piece to play with. It was a bright and wintry evening in January, with a full moon hanging over Piccadilly Circus and all the lamps alight and shining. Ivan had time and to spare to notice such things; and that was about all he had got.

He had halted before one of those dazzling restaurants where they tempt you by putting gorgeous food in the window; and to Ivan just then any food would have looked gorgeous and any restaurant dazzling. His famished interior yearned, simply yearned, towards two large fish with their tails stuck in their mouths and garnished with lemon and parsley; and there were a whole tongue covered in a coat of shiny brown stuff and a couple of chickens roasted to a turn. A live lobster glared at him with black eyes like beads. And there was fruit: pineapples, ordinary apples, grapes, oranges, and bananas, piled high in fancy baskets!

People, more fortunate than himself, were entering this restaurant or coming out full fed. He watched them; and next he watched the process at the pay-desk. Through the large glass door you could see it all. You gave up your bill and your money, you waited for your change if there was any, and then you passed the big porter in the blue uniform with five service medals. Now, thought Ivan, if I had the nerve to go in and eat, I might be able to slip past the pay-desk and dodge the porter.

Like his old pal Harrison, and the dome of St. Paul's, which was still standing, it was only an idea. He didn't do that kind of thing, never had done, never would do; and, besides, he still had the sixpence, and he still had his overcoat and a spare suit of clothes left. He was thinking these

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matters over when he became aware of a face as hungry as his own—hungrier, far, far hungrier, and, being a girl's face, lamentably pathetic. Pale cheeks, drawn and sunken, pale lips, drooping at the corner, an exquisite little nose, and the saddest eyes—such was the profile that had arrested Ivan Blakeway. And the eyes, as a moment ago his own eyes had feasted, were devouring the roast chicken, the garnished fish, the grapes, the pineapples, and all the rest of it. She was quietly dressed in black, in mourning, and that made it all the more heartrending and pitiful.

"Would you be annoyed and offended if I asked you to come inside and have dinner with me?" Ivan had issued the invitation. Suddenly it had slipped out, by itself—almost by itself.

"I would be most grateful."

The beautiful voice held tears in it. She faced him unsteadily, with the loveliest face that he had ever seen. He knew—no one better!—what it was to be cold and hungry and a bit shaky on one's pins.

"Take my arm," he said, "if you need it. You'll feel better presently."

Her little hand touched his coat-sleeve and they entered the restaurant.

"Just pull yourself together," whispered Ivan; "it'll be over in a moment."

Her pale lips formed the word "Thanks."

THEY followed a waiter to a table in a corner where there was just room for two.

Now she was at rest beside him and he felt glad. Never for himself would he have done such a disgraceful thing; but for this orphaned, friendless girl—who could resist? Not Ivan Blakeway!

She revived a little after the soup; she took an interest in her fish; she ate hungrily when the boiled chicken came with rice and celery; and after the ice-cream she had become a charming girl, who opened her handbag, looked in the tiny mirror, took out a powder-puff and applied it to her nose.

"You guessed I was hungry," she said, peeling a banana; "most people would have thought I was a bit blotto—I was shaky, wasn't I? I was starving, right enough. You're a good sort; what's your name?"

Ivan told her.

"A kind of knight-errant, rescuing damsels in distress—any other occupation?"

"Nothing that matters."

"Would you like one?"

"What is it?"

"Nothing; only I was thinking——"

"What?" he asked again.

"You're so abominably good-looking; it's a pity to waste it."

Ivan reddened.

"No, I'm not making love to you; you needn't feel scared," she reassured him.

"What's *your* name?" asked Ivan.

"Annie—I'm Orphan Annie"; and she laughed. "Don't you know me? Look at me hard and think."

Ivan looked at her hard and thought.

The face seemed not unknown; and yet he couldn't place it.

"You're not one of the girls who were working at Peterson's; perhaps you were in another department?"

"What's Peterson's?"

"The firm I was with in the City."

"No; but it doesn't matter. May I have some black coffee and an Egyptian cigarette?"

Ivan beckoned to the waiter, who brought what was required. It wouldn't be a very big bill, he reflected. They hadn't had any wine, she had asked for sparkling cider; she wasn't one of those girls who were out to rook you. He wondered who she was, as she sat there, contented, in her threadbare mourning, the colour back in her cheeks, her eyes alight, her mouth no longer drooping. Well, he didn't know. Probably he would never see her again; though, if the worst came to the worst, she might read about him in the newspaper. Still, it was worth it; and it made him happy to see her, new, revived, like a flower he had placed in water.

His face showed what he was feeling.

"You're good, Ivan," she said, thoughtfully, "a real white man; and you weren't looking any too grand yourself."

"I'm an orphan too," he answered; "perhaps that's it."

"And you're spending the money they left you?" She read him that way.

"Yes," he answered. What did it matter?

"I wouldn't," she said; "I'd get a job." She was looking almost motherly. How her face changed, he thought, alive of a sudden to its variety, its constant play of expression.

"You looked so sad when I met you," he began, "and now you look so gay and cheerful—quite different."

"If I'd looked so gay and cheerful before, you wouldn't have asked me."

"That's true."

"Well, what are you grumbling about?" she teased him.

"I'm not grumbling; only you change so—one can't help noticing it."

"Anything else you've noticed?"

"You've beautiful hands; never did any work with them, did you?"

"Depends on what you call work," she said; "I use them quite a lot. Thanks for my good dinner, Ivan."

**"Would you be annoyed and offended if I asked you to come inside and have dinner with me?"**

"Where'll you get the next one?"

"Never you mind. You've been an angel." She was serious now and sorrowful; a creature of many moods, he thought, watching her face cloud over. She rose, and he helped her into her black coat.

The moment had come.

Their bill lay ready for them and folded. Ivan picked it up. He left his sixpence on the table for the waiter; it wasn't much, but it was better than nothing at all; and the girl could think what she liked about it.

"You go ahead," he said to her. "Just go right through to the street, and if I don't come, don't wait for me. You'd probably like to go home now." It was awkward; but what else could he say? "I wouldn't wait," he repeated. He saw the trouble that might come to him, and he didn't want her to be mixed up in it. He had only given her her dinner; he didn't want to mix her up in any trouble.

She seemed to be discovering something of what he felt. She gave him a glance,

sharp and searching. "I'll wait," she said; and next she was gone and he was pulling himself together. He must keep his mind to it now and watch the pay-desk, and there was that fellow in uniform with the medals.

Ivan lingered a moment, and fortune favoured him. There were several people at the pay-desk, and for an instant the porter took his eye off them and held the door for an affluent couple who wanted a taxi. That was Ivan's chance. He took it and sauntered out into the street. It was incredibly simple, incredibly easy. No one had seen him but the girl who was waiting. She had seen him; she had tumbled to it. Her face fell. "Lordie," she gasped, "it's that way!"

He found her with a start.

"You're still here?" he asked. His heart was beating wildly. He had never done this before, he would never do it again; he had been lucky—but never again!

The girl had stopped a passing taxi.

"Get inside," she said.

He hesitated.

"Do as you're told." She had flung the door open.

He obeyed. The last three or four minutes had unmanned him.

The girl had given the driver an address, where Ivan could not tell; but there'd be money to pay at the end and he hadn't a bean, literally not a bean! Why, in Heaven's name, had he begun it? He waited in a new sweat of suspense for the row that was coming to him with the driver. First he had bilked the restaurant, and now this taxi-driver. He sat there, silent, overwhelmed by this new misfortune.

The girl was silent too.

Once her hand touched his and rested on it.

That comforted him a little.

She came closer.

"Ivan," she said, "you were so sorry for me that you had to give me that dinner. You'd never have done it for yourself; and you were more starving and broke than I was. And in case there should be trouble you sent me on ahead, so as to be out of it. That was fine of you; you've been fine all through. I could have got clean away; you did what you could for me."

"It wasn't much," said Ivan.

The taxi stopped. They had come to an imposing block of flats.

She opened the door and descended.

She paid the man.

"Come on, Ivan," she said.

SHE led the way to a flat on the ground floor. She produced a key and let herself in. A light was burning in the entrance hall. "You'll leave your hat and overcoat."

Ivan obeyed.

She opened the door of a pleasant room, with sofas and chairs and cushions, and a blazing fire before which sat an elderly lady who was knitting. A large, clean-shaven man sprawled in another chair and smoked a huge cigar.

"I've tried it out, Cherry," cried the girl, "and it was wonderful; but there's got to be a different ending. This is Mr. Ivan Blakeway. He's made me see it."

Ivan came forward; the girl had seized him by the arm.

"This is Mr. Cherry Cazalet," she ran on; "my producer, my director, my wild man, my everything; and this is mother."

Ivan bowed.

"Wonderful child, explain yourself! Pleased to meet you, Mr. Ivan Blakeway," said the big man, removing his cigar and offering Ivan an arm-chair. The elderly lady was smiling up at him pleasantly.

Ivan, confused, amazed, and entirely out of his depth, could only listen. What was he doing here? Who were these people? They were real; and yet only a moment ago——

"Now listen, children," the girl had pursued; "it's like this. Orphan Annie's wandering round, starved and cold and tears in her lovely eyes and all her money gone. She looks into the cook-shop window; it's a restaurant, really—we'll make it a restaurant, and the window's full of things to eat. She looks and she looks, growing hungrier and hungrier, and she's discovered by this young man; and he isn't a villain enamoured of her charms and ready to pile her up with limousines and guilty splendour. He's a real white man, like Ivan, a white man through and through. And such a good-looker, with his wavy hair and fine blue eyes and figure! And he's starving, too, and he's cold and without a cent and only the clothes he's got on him. That's the fellow, not the other one!"

Mr. Cherry Cazalet nodded.

"And he chances it and invites her in and feeds her as full as she can hold," the girl ran on; "and he doesn't want anything for his trouble, and he sends her home, good and prompt, and faces the music. The porter and the woman at the pay-desk and all that crowd get at him and there's no end of a fuss; and then in breaks old man Cherry Cazalet, who has watched it all, and offers him a job. Cherry knows what this fine young fellow's really done. See it, Cherry? That's better than the other way, all old stuff—this is different."

"Yes, it's different," Cherry agreed.

"And Ivan's going to play the young man; I want him."

"Well, if you want him, there's no more to be said."

Ivan was reviving. Even a notion of where he was and with whom was beginning to filter through the mists.

"You're Muriel Wendover?" he asked, suddenly. "Now I remember; I've seen you on the pictures, haven't I?"

"You've got it."

"And you've been trying a new part over in real life instead of in a studio?"

"She always does; she's an artist," explained Muriel Wendover's mother.

"A great artist," corrected Mr. Cherry Cazalet. "Lives the part before she plays it. She'd starved herself all to-day and yesterday; and this new story happens in London. That's why we're here."

"Ivan's lived it too," cried the girl; "that's one reason why I want him; and, perhaps, there's another."

"Get inside," she said. He hesitated. "Do as you're told."

Even now, two years later, Ivan Blakeway, the famous film actor, can only marvel at the way in which greatness was thrust into his hand; and the dome of St. Paul's is still standing, and he no longer sees his old pal Harrison with that imaginary offer of an imaginary job; and he's been back and paid his bill at that Heaven-sent restaurant and tipped the waiter properly.

# The T'ANG MIRROR

By

## EDWARD KNOBLOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY
E. F. SHERIE

PAUL LIVINGSTON DE PEYSTER came out of the house at last. A clear icy night-wind was blowing through the whistling streets of New York. It whipped the sleety loose flakes of snow out of the dry gutters, setting them spinning like sudden water-spouts that whirled for an instant, to split again at once into ghostly ribbons hissing along the polished asphalt in wild, fantastic undulations. A gustful of them rose up and struck Paul's face—sharp as splinters of granite. He turned quickly to his limousine. The chauffeur was inside it, fast asleep. Impatiently Paul rapped on the glass.

"Sorry, sir!" the man mumbled, blinking himself awake as he stepped heavily out of the car.

"Confound you, Elwood!" Paul snarled. "I've told you twice before. I won't have you sit inside!"

"It was *that* cold, sir. And so very late—almost two, sir!" Elwood ventured to protest in an unmistakable Cockney voice. "And to-morrow, sir——"

"That'll do! Don't let me catch you at it again!" the other cut him short. "Home!"

"Yessir!" and Elwood touched his cap, tucked De Peyster in his fur rug, closed the door with the discreetest of clicks, and settled himself behind the wheel.

He drove through Seventy-second Street towards Fifth Avenue, and then along the Park, down town. De Peyster huddled back in a corner, soon aglow with the warmth of his fur coat, his rug, and well-heated car. Outside the wind leant against the motor; the bonnet had to slice it in half in order to push its way homewards.

Fifth Avenue was practically deserted, save for a policeman now and then sheltering in some doorway, his collar turned up, his ears encased in black velvet ear-caps, stamping his legs and swinging his arms criss-cross over his chest to beat the blood alive in his numbing body. At Fifty-ninth Street, against the marble balustrade by the fountain, leant the wind-blown figure of a woman clutching the collar of her cloak with her right hand, her left trying vainly to restrain the furious tug of her flapping garments.

"How very effective!" thought De Peyster from his cosy citadel in the car. To him this was not a wretched woman being torn by the winter, but merely a note, perfectly placed, in the composition of a chance picture of night and storm.

For De Peyster was first and foremost an æsthete, had always been an æsthete from the very day that his mind or soul—whatever you wish to call it—had become conscious of the fact that there was such a thing as art. He was quite a small boy at the time—barely five. That was over fifty-five years ago now, when Fourteenth Street was still the fashionable centre and Union Square the place where proud mothers in Paisley shawls and sweeping skirts paraded their tartan-kilted boys round and round the green patches of grass under the shade of opulent elms.

One afternoon, as Paul's mother was steer-

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ing him home through the dreadful traffic of two landaus, a tinkling "horse-car," a Fifth Avenue stage-coach, a brewery wagon, and a baker's cart (What was New York coming to?), she hurried as quickly as elegance would permit to seek safety on the side-walk in front of Tiffany's. Paul, scampering by her side, looked up, and for the first time caught sight of the clock over the shop-door. It was a huge clock, which fact very naturally delighted his childish eye. But there was far more here to delight him than a mere clock. The figure of a man was supporting it on his shoulders—"Atlas" his mother called the man, though till then Paul had always been told that "Atlas" was the name for a large flat book. Never mind! The book and the man had the same name; just as there was "Lord and Taylor," where mother bought her pretty lace breakfast caps, and there was also the Lord to whom you said your prayers at night, whose other name was apparently God.

Anyhow, Atlas — whatever the reason might be for calling him so—became at once a definite, splendid fact in Paul's growing world. The creature loomed enormous —just like a fairy-tale giant—terrifyingly powerful! At the same time he wasn't a bit like a real man; he stood quite still, supporting the clock, his mighty hands on his hips, his head bent—not a move of a single one of his fingers or toes. It was amazing for anyone to be so good, so unreal and yet so real — thrilling — wonderful! Mother said Atlas was a statue—a work of art. "Art!" Paul remembered.

From that moment, vaguely at first, then more and more clearly, the thing called "Art" became something very vital to his

At Fifty-ninth Street, against the marble balustrade by the fountain, leant the wind-blown figure of a woman.

being. Now at sixty, when he looked back over a long life, he realized that the one force which had led him on and on, and yet held together the many moods and varied adventures of his years, was just this particular feeling for art! It was like a string joining an endless row of multi-coloured beads—this strong, innate appreciation of his for the beautiful in nature as interpreted by man.

His car passed the marble palace of Tiffany, nowadays twenty-four blocks farther up town and on the opposite side of Fifth Avenue. Paul couldn't help waving to his old friend Atlas, who, too, had wandered northward in the mighty, irresistible march of New York. There he stood once more above the shop, calm and resigned, bravely supporting the relentless dial of Time. As Paul's car whizzed by the statue, he gave it a quick, critical glance. How absurd that such an extremely perfunctory piece of sculpture should have proved his first conscious realization of beauty! He smiled wistfully as he recalled, in a vague general way, the countless great works of creative genius which he had learnt to know so intimately since those dream-like days of his exquisite mother in her rusty-red Paisley shawl. How smoothly she trailed her softly swishing skirts! The grace of that small head of hers on those sloping shoulders! Her slim erect throat, encircled caressingly by her necklace of pearls! How their glow became her! No woman had ever had a better right to wear pearls than she had! No woman would ever again have a better right——

AND another later scene linked itself into his memory. When he was ten—shortly before her death. He was sitting at her knee. On her other side sat his cousin Sally, nine years old, pudgy, with round, honest eyes. Mother was reading some fairy-story all about the bejewelled wedding of some magic Eastern princess. Suddenly she broke off, pointing to her own pearls.

"Paul, when you marry, these pearls shall belong to *your* princess. But if you never find her, they shall be *yours*, Sally! Remember that, Paul, darling—both of you!"

And she had made Paul kiss his cousin by way of sealing the compact. Many years later, when Paul came into his property and had to draw up his first will, he followed his mother's instructions to the letter and left the pearls to his cousin Sally, should he predecease, unmarried. Invariably in all his later wills the same bequest reappeared unaltered. For he had never married. He had never found "his princess." And yet he had known many women in his long life! Heaven knows how many!

But the picture of his mother had ever remained with him unapproached—apart—enshrined! Dead, so young, in all her ivory loveliness, lying there in her bed with her tapering pallid hands crossed for ever on her still breast! Gone! And after? What remained of her now? Nothing save his memory of her and just one intimate reminder—that necklace of hers! He had not parted with the pearls to his cousin. He had kept them always against the day when "his princess" should come along—the one woman worthy to succeed his mother, around whose throat to clasp them at last—a legacy of beauty to beauty.

But somehow she had never come—never quite the right woman. He was to blame for it. He alone. For invariably, in all his many love-affairs, he had managed to disentangle himself somehow, to remain free—unbound. Always he had forced himself to stand aloof from his passion, watching it with the lynx-eyed coldness of the artist—the true connoisseur who loves to love but who refuses to cede that last scrap of his inner self which every woman sets out to possess and without which she feels cheated of everything. No! He had not sacrificed that—not his will to deny, if he chose. That never! Not in the impetuous days of his young desires. Nor in his full manhood. Nor in his vigorous old age. Always he had dominated, dominating himself first—the woman after. Even to-night, with "the Moraska," had he managed to hold himself well in hand. Even when she leant over him as he sat on the couch, her cheek close to his, stroking his arm with her marvellous, nervous, ruby-ringed fingers—claw-like and grasping as the fingers of Boldini's scented cats of the world.

"You *will* give them to me—won't you?" she purred into his ear with her enchanting foreign intonation. "I adorre jewels. And I know how to wearr them. How many women do that? My thrroat would make them live again—those poor dead pearrls of your dearr mother!"

Why had he showed them to her the last time she dined at the house? He hadn't shown them to any other woman—ever. They were among the few sacred things in his life. Strange! Why had he done it? What a fool——

Here she was now to-night, after the opera, having invited him to supper in her apartment, actually asking for the necklace point-blank—keeping him with her till all hours, cajoling, flattering, fondling, using every trick of her infernal, fascinating person to drive him to a conclusive "Yes."

It had been a marvellous evening of

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fencing; better—a duel of life and death. Suddenly at sixty, to face a completely beautiful, intelligent creature in the very prime of her womanhood—a musician of the first order; a linguist with a clash of thought and wit which shot up sparkle and epigram

as rockets are shot up out of a Roman candle—was a surprise, a joy, a menace such as De Peyster had not hoped to experience again in his life. In his long career he had fenced with other women as brilliant in one way or another. And possibly as beautiful. And as gifted. But none of them had combined all the qualities that seemed to meet and mingle so completely in the extraordinary personality of the Moraska.

And then, besides, the Moraska happened to be Paul's type. That made an enormous difference. And he knew it. A small head, a body literally "like a wand," dark eyes, a nose delicately tilted, rather large, sensitive nostrils, a full mouth, undeniably sensual, the most perfect of pointed chins, and, above all, a neck divinely straight and slim! She was the type that he had dreamt of always, searched for, and never found till now. There is a picture of the "Potocka." You know it. The Moraska resembled it strangely—a less ethereal faun-sister to her countrywoman. For she was Polish, "of the old aristocracy," she said; though there were lurid, unproven rumours to the contrary.

WHAT did it matter to Paul—who she was, where she came from? She *was*. That and only that mattered. She had come to New York to sing. In a single concert she had won her way straight to the front. There is no other city in the world where success is so much a thing of hit or miss as New York; where popularity is as instantaneous and as extreme.

The Moraska had been one of the lucky ones. Her voice was beautiful and beautifully trained. She had beautiful taste in her gowns. She was beautiful herself—an artist. The public took her to its heart at once. She became a stock phrase overnight.

De Peyster had met her in the house of a multi-millionaire hostess. They were instantly attracted to each other. She knew at a glance that he loved women. He knew that he was going to love her—did love her, in fact, at a glance. After that they were close friends. "Closer than close friends," the know-alls whispered.

"Old white-haired Papa De Peyster on the warpath again!" one of his dearest friends at the club cackled. "He'll get electrocuted this time, you'll see! That woman's got enough voltage in her to sizzle up the North Pole!"

The amiable remark was, of course, promptly retailed to him by another one of his dearest friends at the club.

"The North Pole! You can tell him with my compliments that up to date I've got the whole thermometer between me and freezing-point!" Paul chuckled sharply. "And as for voltage, no woman has ever managed to over-charge me yet!"

He couldn't help being pleased with his *bon mot*. It was neat, very neat. But then his witticisms had always flown about New York—like swallows on the wing. They were quoted everywhere.

He marched out of the club that day, head erect, looking at himself sideways in the large mirror in the hall.

"White-haired Papa indeed!" he commented as he rapidly took in his finely-chiselled features, his smooth skin, his clear eye. No one would give him more than forty-eight—forty-five—to glance at him quickly. White-haired, of course. But white was so becoming with dark eyebrows. So distinguished! Like the days of powder.

That happened last week! And to-night—if his dearest club friend, Number One, could only have seen him and the Moraska in their love-duel up there in her apartment to-night! He wouldn't have called him "White-haired Papa" then. No! Not when a man could actually——

The car stopped short. De Peyster's mind had travelled far since he left the Moraska up in Seventy-second Street. A whole world had rushed through it. From there to his own little red-brick house in Eleventh Street was after all only a matter of fifteen minutes—less on an unobstructed night like this.

The cold struck icily upon his senses as the chauffeur opened the door for him to step out. The man touched his cap.

"Would you mind, sir, if I 'ad to-morrow orf?" Elwood asked, obsequiously.

"Impossible! Come to me at eleven as usual to take your orders!"

"But I was going to get married to-morrow, sir!"

"Then you've got to get married another time—that's all!" he grunted back, adding sharply, "I pay you well, don't I?"

"Yes, sir. But a man don't get married every——"

"I can't argue here in the freezing cold. There are plenty of chauffeurs out of a job, I'm told!"

Without another glance at Elwood, De Peyster climbed the iron-railed "stoop" and rang the door-bell. He had never carried a house-key in his life. It was one of his principles not to, in order to oblige his servant to sit up for him.

He opened the plate-glass swing-doors and let himself into the little entry, facing the old-fashioned white silver-handled front-doors. He had to wait some moments. He tapped his ring impatiently on the glass. In another moment sleepy, shuffling feet announced the coming of the man.

"George! I've had to wait!" he

"George! I've had to wait!"
"I jus' dropped off a wink, Mr. Paul! It's late!"

growled at the old negro servant, whose dark cheeks looked grey with weariness.

"I jus' dropped off a wink, Mr. Paul! It's late!" George replied in his musical, good-natured voice.

"What's the matter with you all—making this ridiculous fuss about 'late'?" De Peyster grunted as George helped him out of his furs. "If *I* can sit up, *you* can sit up!"

"Well, I won't say that it ain't a-tellin' on you, Mr. Paul!" George ventured, with the freedom of an old servant. "Turnin' night into day, the way you has this las' three months! You're beginnin' to look mighty queer!"

"Rubbish!" De Peyster retorted. "Get me a brandy-and-soda. Bring it up to the library!"

"Yes, Mr. Paul!" and George disappeared into the dining-room.

THE library was in the front on the third floor. It was only separated from the bedroom at the back by a large curtained arch. At night the curtains were drawn aside, thus making one large airy apartment of the whole. When De Peyster lay in his lordly Italian carved bed, he could survey with ease his many treasures—rare furniture, books, paintings, pottery which he had collected in many countries in the course of many years of "hunting." The rooms—or rather room—proclaimed a mind of most exquisite judgment and taste. The possessor obviously knew and loved what he possessed.

De Peyster switched on the softly-shaded lights and looked with pride about the place. The sight of it always gave him a fresh thrill—a sense of power—a joy in ownership. No one in New York had quite such perfect rooms! Undoubtedly there were far richer ones and full of far more priceless works of art. But none were more carefully, more intelligently chosen, more harmoniously put together! And then De Peyster's personal association with each separate piece! The endless searching, the unexpected opportunities—the marvellous bargains—the finds! That little Memling, for instance, slipping through at that auction; and that fourth-century Greek torso under the counter in the London pawn-shop; and that priceless early Chinese pottery! The horses—the camels—the warriors! And above all, the mirror—that T'ang mirror of white bronze! Paul was there in China, actually on the spot, at Lao-Yang, as it came out of the earth! They were cutting a canal through a mound, when they hit upon a long-forgotten tomb. What a bit of luck he should have stopped to admire the colour and movement of that ant-heap of coolies in their infinite gradations of faded blue! He bought the mirror for a mere song—a few dollars to the foreman of the gang! The fellow never even realized that the actual silver in the bronze was worth ten times what Paul had given him—poor idiot!

Long before the war, Professor Max Wasserstock, the celebrated German sinalogue, who was buying all over the world for the Oriental museum at Hamburg, had offered Heaven knows what for the mirror. At last, when Paul definitely refused to part with it, the worthy Professor could not desist airing his knowledge and explaining the "full value and rarity of de opject."

To begin with, he pointed out that the mere size of it was most unusual, being almost two feet in diameter. Only in the ancient Imperial treasure-house of Shosoin at Nara in Japan, he said, might there be found another, distantly resembling its untarnished splendour. Either the metal of it was composed of some very unusual alloy, or the earth in which it had lain possessed a strange virtue, for its polished surface shone with a brilliant, faintly greenish radiance, such as might glow in the reflection of some cool, mysterious well. The back of the mirror was a masterly swirl of design—the fire-bird rising from tempest-tossed seas to a resplendent sun, skilfully mimicked in gold. An inscription ran round the edge. After much scratching of his frowzy head, Professor Wasserstock had managed to unravel its meaning:—

"ONLY THE DEAD CANNOT SEE THEMSELVES BY MY LIGHT."

By "dead" the Professor explained that that particular Chinese character did not mean "dead of body," but "dead of soul." It was a classic reference to some Taoist teaching, an illusion to the annihilating force of Truth.

De Peyster used the mirror to shave by, to brush his hair by, to tie his tie by. Before leaving China he had had a special lacquer stand constructed for it. It stood obliquely by his bedroom window, facing him as he lay in bed. But from his pillow he could not see himself in the mirror. It was one of the annoyances of his life! If only the bed had been eighteen inches higher, or the mirror eighteen inches lower! However, as by sitting upright he could easily catch his reflection, he felt it a mistake to alter the design and proportions of either the bed or the stand, merely to have the occasional satisfaction of catching sight of his face as he lay there reading his paper in the morning, or his book at night.

"After all," he decided with noble philosophy, "one can't have *everything* in this weary world, even if one does manage to have most things most times!"

But this particular evening—or night, for it was well past two—Paul was not suffering from any sense of resignation, neither because of greater nor of lesser annoyances. In fact, to-night the world seemed to him a very smooth place indeed—smooth and shiny, like a huge parquet floor on which to "one-step" with the right partner, to the right music, whispering the right words—indefinitely—eternally——

"The Moraska—yes," he mumbled, half aloud, as he flashed his mind back over the last few hours. He went up to his writing-table and picked up her photograph. He had begged it of her early in their acquaintance. It was the one photograph he had ever permitted to intrude on these esoteric surroundings of his. The infinite grace of her slender neck, gently weighted by the

beauty of her drooping head—as a stem is weighted by a flower in its pride—had decided him finally to break this rule about photographs. Later, when their friendship had ripened and she had become more, much more, to him than merely a beautiful woman, the picture seemed to begin slowly to crowd every other object out of the room. He would sit in front of it a long, long time before going to bed, gazing and gazing. He would imagine himself with her under all sorts of fantastic conditions. See himself crouched by her side, his arms about her, on a magic carpet flying far away—far away—back to the sunrise of his youth!

"His youth?" he asked himself, suddenly. Nonsense! He wasn't old. He was sixty—but not really sixty. He was like other men of forty-five! He was strong, he was passionate, he was extraordinary. She had said so herself—only to-night she had said so! Just before she asked him for those pearls of his mother's.

He looked at the picture again. Those pearls! She was right. She would know how to wear them. She, of all women alive. But how *could* he? How *dare* he give them to her? The memory of his mother had shone throughout these many years—immaculate—undefiled! What right had he to give her pearls to the Moraska—to clasp them about that neck—that soft flesh which must have been kissed and kissed by many men? No! It would be a desecration—a sullying of something deep within him. It was the one thing he could not do for her. Everything else, yes—but that——? And yet, and yet—how wonderful they would look on that most perfect of all throats!

THE door opened, and George appeared with the brandy-and-soda on a salver. He brought a note as well.

"I forgot to say, sir, Mrs. Green called to-night. Mrs. Green and Master John. They're going to call again to-morrow. Mos' important."

"Oh, they're in the city again!" De Peyster grunted, opening the note with a bored look.

"Yes, sir. And a fine young gen'leman Master John's grown to be, sir!"

"Dearest Cousin Paul," Paul read aloud, with a sneer, sipping his drink between sentences. Fancy this coming just now! Poor old Sally Green!

And he thought of his fat, faded cousin—the only relation left him in this world, except her son. She had married very badly, a teacher of mathematics in a little college "up State." She was a widow now, with a boy who must be nearly grown-up. They had a way of coming and worrying Paul. Sometimes he gave the mother a little money. More often than not he sent them both away with advice, after a heavy luncheon. They bored him. They were dreadful, they were dreary, unornamental. Once the boy, when he was twelve, had stayed with him for three days. Paul had asked him to pass the matches, and the little fool, in his eagerness to be polite (obviously his mother had impressed Paul's wealth on the child's mind!), had upset a table and shivered a priceless fourth-century Athenian drinking-cup into a thousand bits. He hated little John ever since—in fact, had refused to see him again. That was over five years ago now.

And yet Cousin Sally had a claim on him—that ridiculous old claim of the days when they were children and his mother had made him kiss her.

"If Paul never marries—these pearls shall be yours." Here was Sally actually quoting his mother's words in her letter to him.

"I'm not asking for myself," she continued, in her vapid, characterless hand. "I'm an old woman now."

And a fat and flabby one, Paul thought, with a puffy, perspiring red neck! Charming those pearls would look, popping in and out of its creases!

"I am only thinking of my son," the letter went on. "John is exceptionally gifted. I am not saying this because I happen to be his mother. I *know*. (Underlined. How he hated underlining!) He wants to be an architect. To go to the Boston School of Technology. Years ago you told me that you'd left me the necklace in your will. I gladly renounce my claim to it—at least, to the whole of it—if only for my John's sake you could possibly spare a *few* (underlined again!) of the lesser pearls—*now!*" (Underlined twice!)

A pretty idea! Break up the necklace! That perfect, matchless string! Ruin *that* just to start a lout in an already overcrowded profession! The woman must be a lunatic!

"Get me my pearls! My mother's pearls!" Paul ordered George, who was obliterating himself patiently behind a high Venetian arm-chair.

George turned to the wainscoting and pressed a hidden spring. A piece of panelling swung back, disclosing a little safe in the wall. He clicked out the combination of the lock, with which only Paul and he were acquainted. His long, loyal service had made him an absolutely reliable machine in the eyes of his master. In another moment he had brought the pearls to De Peyster.

Meanwhile Paul had taken a sheet of paper and written a note. He opened the

case, glanced at the pearls a second, looked at the clock, and murmured half aloud :—

"She can't be asleep yet!" Then, turning to George, said curtly: "I'll ring for you later!"

"You'se burning the candle at both ends and in the middle too, Master Paul!" he remarked reprovingly as he slipped from the room.

Paul took up the telephone and tapped it with impatience, till he got his connection.

"Darling! Have I pulled you out of bed?" he said softly. "I couldn't go to sleep without reading you something. Listen to what I've just written!" And he held up his note and read.

"Moraska—dearest! You are right. You are the only woman in the world to wear my mother's pearls. They are yours. I love you with all my being. Paul!"

There came a gurgle and a gush through the telephone, which made Paul blush like a schoolboy. They talked for quite ten minutes.

"Very well," he finally said. "They shall be with you when you wake up. I'll send them by my chauffeur, as soon as he calls in the morning. I'm just longing to see them on that heavenly throat of yours! I adore you!"

"I adorre you, also!" he heard her say—and she had rung off.

He laid the note on the pearls with a quick gesture of decision, then shut the case with a snap.

IT was done! To-morrow the pearls would be the Moraska's! Hers—not Cousin Sally's! He must take that old clause out of his will, leaving them to her—to Sally Green. Sally Green—what a name for a De Peyster to change to! What cheek to write him that sort of letter! He'd teach her to beg and to flatter and to remind! And for what? For whom? For a clumsy oaf of a son! A smasher of priceless Greek vases! Thank you, *no!* No pearls for *him*—the silly dolt! Pearls were for loveliness! For grace! For the eternal feminine!

Yes, he had done the right thing at last! He was certain of it. The only thing! It was absurd to have the slightest doubt, the least qualm about it. Ridiculous—to allow the faint memory of his mother to worry him in the least. Sentimental—squeamish—puritan—bourgeois! What had he lived for, the whole of his life, but his sense of art? The right combination of the lovely with the lovely! Here was the real, the extreme test of proving his convictions. The sacrifice of antiquated prejudice to perfect beauty!

Besides—what a glorious sensation of flinging away, at last, his eternal self-control! Why shouldn't he walk into the trap, hear it snap, feel himself a prisoner, a slave to the Moraska? What did it matter? He had lived his free life. It would be something new to be bound—to serve a woman like her—to be squeezed dry and flung away! There were not many more years ahead of him. But the few, the last, they should be splendid, reckless, magnificent in madness. He would be young as the youngest—only far more astonishing, far more terrible—with all the wisdom of his years and all the strength of his miraculously vigorous body. People should see! New York should have something "rich" to talk about—at last!

He tossed off his drink. He drew in his breath deeply. He slapped his full chest exultantly as he stared hungrily at her picture, whipping himself into a frenzy over her flagrant appeal to his senses. He chuckled! He laughed! He stretched his arms outward from the elbow and back again, delighting in the pinch of his biceps as an athlete does. Who would ever think that he had lived his sixty years? Who would ever dream of it? Never—never would he grow old! Never!

A desire seized him to feed his vanity still further by the reflection of his features. He stepped across lightly to the T'ang mirror. The inscription on its back shot into his mind.

"ONLY THE DEAD CANNOT SEE THEMSELVES BY MY LIGHT."

"The dead of soul," the stodgy old German Professor had said. Not "the dead of body."

Well, Paul would never be "dead of soul" nor "dead of body"! Never! Never!

He switched on the light by the mirror. He came close up to it. He looked—and he looked.

What was the matter? Was his sight failing? He could see nothing—nothing of himself. It was just as if he were not standing in front of the mirror at all. There was no reflection of him in it—not a sign of a reflection whatsoever. And yet he could see the room in the polished metal. He could see it perfectly. The carving of the top of his bed—the wall on either side of it. The pictures on the wall opposite the mirror. What, in Heaven's name, did it mean?

He moved away. He returned. He came close again to its polished surface. He breathed on it. A faint mist formed upon it for an instant, only to vanish again the next. He breathed again. The same thing. He clutched the lacquered stand of the mirror. What

His hands were still clinging to the stand of the mirror. Then it toppled—he toppled with it! Crash!

was happening? Were his senses leaving him?

"Dead of soul." "Dead of body," his mind began to hum. No! It couldn't be! Not *his!* He wasn't "dead of soul." He wasn't "dead of body." What was it, then? Was he dreaming? Had he gone suddenly insane?

A blackness blotted his sight—an awful choking b l a c k n e s s. Something seemed to hit him with a sickening thud at the back of the neck—hit him everywhere—all over the body! His hands were still clinging to the stand. Then it began to rock and sway with his weight, as his knees crumpled under him. The stand toppled—he toppled with it. Crash!!——

HIS next sensation was one of everything seeming far away—ever so far—dreadfully, inexplicably far. It was like having the whole world at the other end of a long tunnel—or rather two tunnels with two distant faint round rings of light. Slowly, gradually, they merged into one. They shone—a pallid pink disc upon his closed eyelids. The whole of his body felt encased in lead—heavy crushing lead. He could not move.

Vaguely he began to realize that he was in bed, in his pyjamas, carefully tucked up. How had he got there?

Then he heard a voice—George's voice. George was whispering to someone else.

"I'se afraid there won't be no orders to-day, Mr. Elwood," he heard him say.

"Cricky!" Elwood muttered in response. "When did it 'appen?"

"Twenty minutes of three. I was waitin' out on the landin' for him to

ring. I heard a crash and rushed in to find him there on the floor—the whites of his eyes a-starin' at me like ghosts. Lord-a-mercy! I'll never forget it! The doctor's only left half an hour ago!"

"A stroke, I suppose. Eh?"

"What rubbish! Stroke!" Paul said to himself, indignantly.

"Cerebral hæmorrhage!" he was surprised to hear George assert solemnly, rolling the long words on his lips with all the gusto of his race. "Yes, *sir!* That's what me and the doctor decided it was. Cerebral hæmorrhage!"

"Well, any'ow, that lets me orf for the day!" Elwood next appeared to say in undisguised relief. "I'll go and get married after all! It's an ill wind and cetera, as they puts it! Cheerio, old ace o' spades!"

"Damn his impudence!" thought Paul, quickly. "He's to go—er—somewhere this morning first thing! Somewhere very important! Where? Where?"

He started to call out to Elwood. Not a sound came from his lips. Only a faint, almost inaudible gurgle seemed to well up in his thick throat. Good God, then it was actually true—what they said about the stroke.

Slowly Paul opened his eyes to a blurred vision about himself. Gradually his sight grew clearer. The kindly anxious face of George became definitely focused.

"Well, Mr. Paul——" he heard him drawl, softly. "You did give us such a scare! Better, are you?"

To his surprise, Paul found himself nodding his head. So he could do that much. He nodded it again.

"Move your head, can you? Why, that's won'erful!" George said, paternally. "You'll be feeling fine by'n by! Jus' grand! Only keep still *now!* Quite still! Them's doctor's orders!"

Paul stared about him vacantly. Everything in the room seemed in its accustomed place. A shaft of sunshine was slanting through the half-drawn bedroom curtains. It struck on the edge of the T'ang mirror. He tried to remember. What was there about the mirror? Hadn't it fallen somewhere—some time? Had George set it up again? "Dead of soul?" "Dead of body?" What were those words? Why were they?

He closed his eyes again wearily. He didn't want to think, but his brain kept unravelling—unravelling——

What had happened? What had *really* happened? The last thing he could remember was some woman—a beautiful woman. His mother, of course. Her lovely neck. Ah, yes, her pearls! Her necklace of pearls!

He opened his eyes again. There was the case on the writing-table just as he had left it—oh, ever so long ago. Why had he left the pearls there? It was quite wrong. George should have put them in the safe. Someone might take them—steal them before the right woman came for them—"his princess." When was she coming? Would she ever come now? He had stopped himself again and again from bringing her home. It was his own fault—his madness to be free—to dominate. Look at him now! What was the good of it now—dominating!

"Dead of soul!" Had he been "dead of soul"? Was that it? No! No! He had always loved everything beautiful—rare. Ugliness had always sickened him—infuriated him. Then why had he been struck down like this? For what reason? What was the true cause?

It must have been something very definite that did it. Some living thing it seemed like, almost. Yes! Something connected with a woman! Not his mother—of course not! No! And yet it did have something to do with her. Funny! Something with her throat—her pearls! What on earth was the connection?

He closed his eyes again, wearily. It was all very confusing, irritating—maddening. Like broken bits of a puzzle, swirling and twirling about in fiendish geometric patterns. Better sleep——

THE next thing he heard was another voice, vaguely familiar to him. He opened his eyes. There stood his Cousin Sally by the side of the bed with her stupid cowlike stare! How plain she was—how dreadfully, uncompromisingly dreary! Somebody else was there, too, in the library, beside her and George. Paul only felt his presence. Somebody young.

"I'm turribly sorry, Cousin Paul," Sally whispered in her nasal drawl. "Turribly. We had *no idea*, till we called just now! John, do tell your cousin how turribly sorry you are!"

And John stepped into Paul's line of vision.

Paul saw before him a fellow of seventeen, well-set-up, keen-eyed, clear-skinned, with the unmistakable cast of the De Peysters' features. There was a fine youthfulness in his face—an ardent trust in ideals to be realized! Here certainly was someone neither "dead of body" nor "dead of soul." Someone, in fact, triumphantly alive! The sort of creature whose reflection would shine and sparkle in the T'ang mir——

That was it! Of course, the mirror! It was the mirror that had done it! The mirror that had struck Paul down—revealing himself to himself suddenly—hideously! Or was it no revelation at all? Was it merely the

oncoming of the stroke that robbed him of his vision? Was the whole thing just a weird coincidence? If only Paul might look in the mirror again! That would solve everything at once.—But he couldn't. Not from where he lay. He never had been able to, unless he sat upright. And he couldn't raise himself now. Not an inch. He couldn't move at all except his head —just a little——

"Cousin Paul," he heard Sally drawling. "I hate to bother you, *now* in particular, if it weren't so turribly important. John's been offered a first-class job in an insurance office. He's got to settle one way or the other by to-night. If he does fix it up, of course it means just sacrificing all his fine talent for the rest of his life!"

John blushed to the roots of his thick brown hair.

There was a slight pause. Then his mother began again, breathless but determined. Paul noticed to his surprise that all the stupid ugliness seemed to melt out of her face as she pleaded for her son.

"If he only had just enough to carry him over, get sort of started, he could work his way right through the 'Tech' by giving tuition," she went on. "That's why I'm pestering you so. That's why I've come to ask you about those pearls of your mother's."

She glanced involuntarily over to the case on the writing-table. Her anxious eye had caught sight of it the moment she entered the room. She had never forgotten it from her childhood days; it had always glowed in her memory—her own particular treasure-chest. She looked at it now again longingly. It meant far more than it had ever done before—her boy's entire future!

Paul caught her look. It seemed to transform her into something grotesquely beautiful—to lift all her heaviness into something passionately maternal.

SALLY moved over to the case, her eyes steadily fixed upon it, picked it up and returned to the side of his bed.

"See here, Cousin Paul," she began again, nervously. "Let's face facts. You're leaving these to me in your will. You'll never marry now. It'll be a good time before you recover. Don't you think you could really spare just a few of them for John, and give him the chance in life he ought to have?"

It was strange, Paul thought, how such a dull lump of a woman could manage to glow so from within!

Instinctively Sally's fingers had found the catch of the case and pressed it open. She looked down at the pearls. There lay Paul's folded note to the Moraska. Thinking it might be a word addressed to herself, Sally opened it and glanced at it rapidly.

"Oh!" she mumbled apologetically. "I'm turribly sorry. So you've decided otherwise. I've seen your name in the papers, linked with hers. Receptions! Parties! So the pearls are to go to *her?* To this Mme. Moraska?"

The Moraska! The Moraska! The pearls! *Her* throat! *Her* lovely *slim* throat! Of course! It was all coming back to him now. His look turned heavily towards the writing-table. Her picture—there it was—exquisite! Her eyes, her mouth—the absolute grace of her gently-drooping head! It was the perfection of her beauty which had finally decided him to offer her the pearls! This infernal fascination of hers, which had driven him to sacrifice the purity of his dead mother to the living woman's supreme sensual appeal. It was she—the Moraska—by her subtle viciousness, who had made him batter down that last ideal within him—the simple reverence in which he had always enshrined his mother's memory! The Moraska had given him the final stab—spiritually as well as physically.

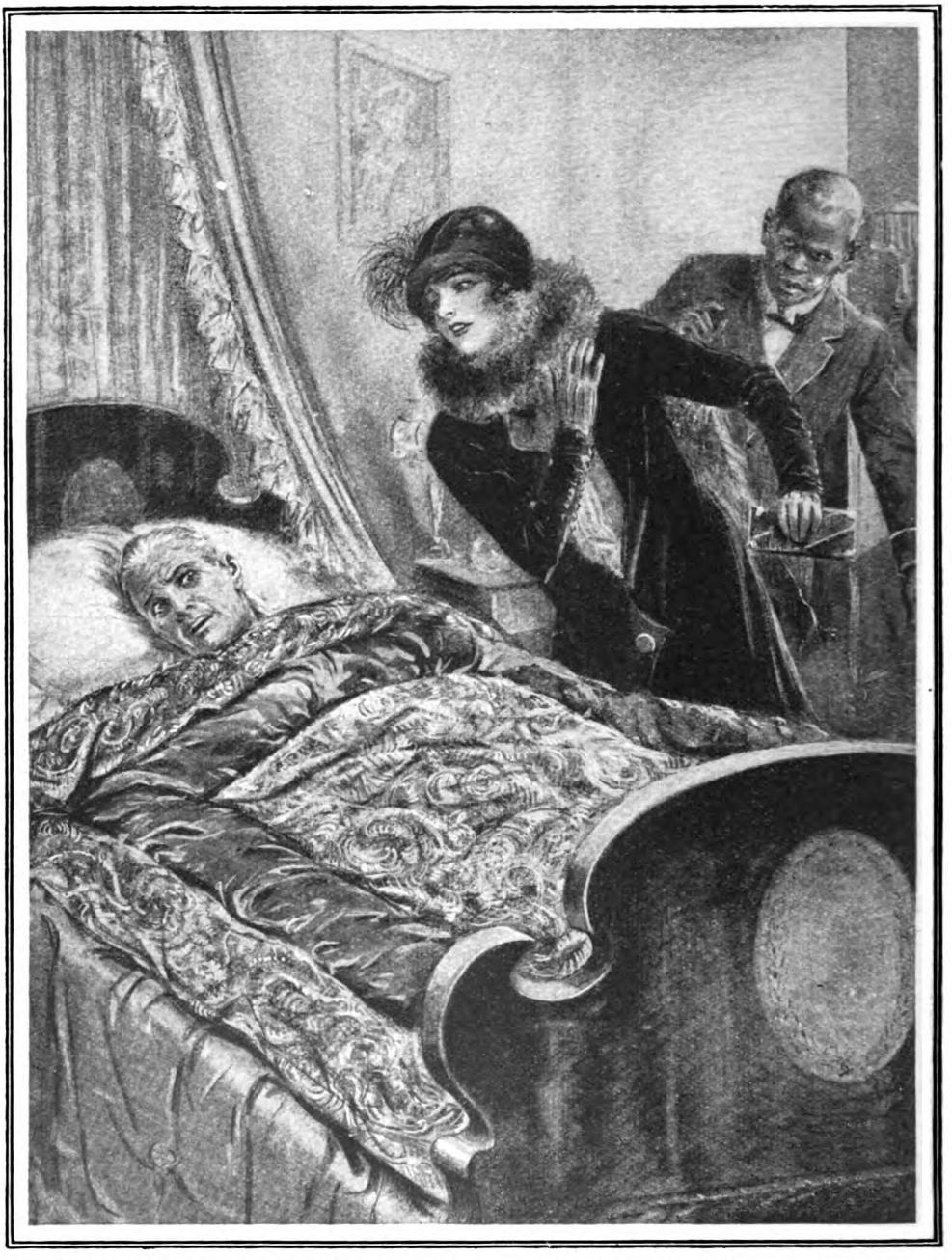
A sudden awful loathing of her overcame him—a loathing of what she had done to him—of what she had made him do. He hated her. He hated himself. The weight of his stricken body lay upon him heavy as the ruins of a fallen house. But heavier still lay the weight of ruin upon his soul.

"Cousin Paul!" Sally began again at last, for she had stood there in silent hesitation for some time, balancing the case with the pearls in one hand and Paul's letter to the Moraska in the other. "Cousin Paul! This woman—this Moraska—she's a great singer, isn't she? She has everything in the world already! John will have nothing if you take this chance away from him. Just tied to the wrong sort of job the whole of his life—nothing else!"

"Mother—please—after all it's Cousin Paul's own business," John interjected shyly.

"No, John!" she said with finality. "No. It's *my* business as much as Cousin Paul's. He knows he's not doing right by me—giving these pearls to that woman and ruining your whole career. Cousin Paul!" she turned to him once more, "I appeal to your conscience! Let me burn this note now, before it's too late. Let my son live the life he was born to live! If you *don't*, take my word for it, God won't forgive you!"

And suddenly it became clear to Paul. She was right—ugly, clumsy, fat old Sally! This was his chance—his moment to redeem himself—to resurrect his "dead of soul." For he saw it plainly now—how dead he was, how dead he had been for many and



**In her rage she suddenly leant over him and with the back of her gloved hand struck him across the face.**

many a day. All his love for art—for the beautiful—what had it been but the love of the outside—the shell? The kernel had withered away within, till there was nothing but mould and dust! Yes, he had been cruel always in his hunt of sensual satisfaction. Cruel! Cheating the seller out of his due profits. Fooling the ignorant into parting with treasures. Smooth words—false smiles—sharp relentless practice, that's

what had filled this treasure-house of his with spoils!

And his servants too, he suddenly realized—what had they been but machines, their endless duty paid for by so much monthly cash? Never had he looked upon them as human beings, never as companions in the daily round of life! What did he know about them? Not a single thing. No more than he had ever known a thing about the many women who had offered their love to him, the love that he had taken and never returned. All, all became clear to him at that moment. Everything in his life had always been physical to him. Everything external—always!

He looked up. His eyes met his cousin's eyes. He knew that he could move his head—a shake or a nod would answer her. If he said "Yes" it meant a definite break with the Moraska—all women—all things earthly.

He glanced across at the mirror, then back to his cousin. Slowly he nodded his head. A smile of intense relief spread over Sally's faded features. Without a word she turned to the mantelpiece and dropped his note to the Moraska into the fire.

She came back to him to pour out thanks. He shook his head wearily and closed his eyes——

WHEN he opened them again—it must have been some time in the afternoon—the Moraska herself stood before him. She was wonderfully gowned in black velvet, her beauty shining upon him more resplendently than ever. She came close and leant over him. Her sweet pungent scent floated up his nostrils and stirred the last lambent ember of his senses. She kissed him gently on the cheek.

"Darling—how dreadful!" she whispered, a tear—just enough of a tear—gathering in the corner of her large dark eye. "I would have come at once! But I waited—waited as you had told me to, last night on the telephone. I did not wish to prresent myself without those pearrls!"

And her eyes swept the room discreetly.

George stood by the writing-table, a picture of non-committal respect.

"Do you know where they arre?" she asked him softly, after just the right length of pause.

"The pearls, ma'am, the family pearls, you mean?" he said, with all the histrionic acumen of the negro. "Yes, ma'am, I know where they are. They're in the safe."

"But they're mine! Mine! He prromised them to me last night. Wrote me a letter. Read it to me through the telephone!" and she turned to Paul appealingly. "Didn't you, dearrest?"

"Mister Paul changed his mind, ma'am!" George came to his master's rescue.

"How could he? He had his strroke just after he telephoned, you said."

"It was like this, ma'am," George continued, lying heroically. "I'd just come in the room to see him to bed, when I hear him say, a-talkin' to hisself, 'No, I won't give 'em to that woman. They belongs to my Cousin Sally. She's sure got the first claim.' And he goes and throws the letter in the fire and puts the pearls back in the safe with a bang. After that he jus' drops down and has this cerebral hæmorrhage of his."

"Is this trrue?" the Moraska cried, facing Paul. "You arre not going to give them to me after all?"

Paul nodded his head.

"Pig! You pig!" she suddenly burst out, revealing the utter rawness of her origin. "You mean to tell me I've wasted all this winterr with you for nothing? Nothing? Given up the chances of a lifetime for miserrable old dirrt like you?"

And in her rage she suddenly leant over him and with the back of her gloved hand struck him across the face.

He could feel the punch of a cabochon ruby through her glove upon his cheek-bone. It seemed to crack something in him. Something that hurled red flames of fire into his eyes. The flames revolved like pin-wheels, shooting off sparks. Through them thoughts—words—were darting furiously. Moraska—cabochon. Sparks! Pearls—Tiffany—Union Square. More and more sparks! His mother—the Paisley shawl—Atlas—the huge clock with the hands whirling, whirling madly about—like the firework pin-wheels! The hands *were* the fireworks—a blazing sun—the T'ang mirror! Had he—regained—his soul? . . .

Two dead eyes stared the question.

PAUL LIVINGSTON DE PEYSTER'S collection of beautiful things is in an alcove by itself in the New York Metropolitan Museum. He left everything he possessed to that noble institution, even his money for the acquisition of further rare objects of art. Only the pearls were bequeathed to his Cousin Sally, in accordance with the old clause of his original will.

The T'ang mirror is one of the "show" pieces in the central case. Its decorated back faces the spectator obliquely, its polished surface resting against a piece of antique jade-green Genoese cut velvet.

No one knows of the mirror's secret power. And no one will ever seek to know. For where is a thing more safely, more finally buried than in a museum?

# "WHAT SHALL I BE ?"
# The Choice of a Career

The object of these articles is to help boys and their parents to settle the question, "What shall I be?" Boys are often attracted by the external appearance of a profession and adopt it without any notion of its duties and requirements. Not seldom they are disappointed. The mental response to one's work is all-important, for unless one likes his job he is unlikely to excel, and he is certain to be unhappy in it. He can of course change, but too frequent changes are disturbing factors in achieving a career.

These contributions, written by men who have won distinction in their various callings, are selections from a book compiled by

J. A. R. CAIRNS
*(the well-known Metropolitan Magistrate),*

and dedicated to H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES. The book, published by Messrs. J. W. Arrowsmith (London), Ltd., will appear shortly.

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IV.

## THE BAR.

By

SIR ERNEST E. WILD, K.C.
*(Recorder of London).*

FOR the great and attractive profession of Barrister-at-Law the aspirants are many, while probably seventy per cent. are failures. The wig and gown have much to answer for in this regard: they are so becoming, and it is only human to like to present a becoming, and withal a distinguished, appearance. Moreover, there is the traditional epithet of "learned," to which a call to the Bar entitles its votaries. How alluring to any young man, or woman, to be arrayed in wig and gown, and to be *ipso facto* learned! The dual appeal of apparel and nomenclature accounts for a high percentage of the failures. Therefore, at the outset, let the aspirant for forensic success denude himself or herself of both apparel and nomenclature. These are but the trappings and the suits of potential disaster. At the Bar, as in every other walk of life, it is the human being, with all his possibilities, his capabilities, his limitations, that alone counts. Not that I would abolish the garb or the epithet: both are of value as helps to strenuous endeavour: in themselves they are nothing.

But it cannot too strongly be impressed upon the youth that he must examine himself, weigh himself, prepare himself, before embarking upon the perilous adventure of a call to the Bar.

Speaking from a worldly point of view, what should be his aim? Certainly not money. A modest competence can be gained by any adaptable and properly equipped young man who is called to the Bar. A comfortable income can be made by a comparative few. If money be your objective, sell hats or oil. Ambition is the keynote to forensic success. There is fame to be won. There are prizes to be secured. There is history to be made. There is—most important point of all—great and good work to be done. You will be required to give opinions which may displease your client, and perchance lose him. In you will be reposed confidences more inviolable than those of any other profession. Your standard of honour must be of the highest. While striving for success in any particular cause or matter, you must never forget that you are a Minister of Justice; that it is your duty to co-operate with the judge or magistrate—never attempt to hoodwink or bamboozle him. When you cross-examine a witness you should never catch an answer, or deliberately misinterpret what the witness has inadvertently said. You must be courteous to the older practitioner and kindly to the younger. Above all, always keep your temper and preserve your poise. Oh, it is indeed a difficult profession — the Bar!

Sir Ernest E. Wild, K.C.
*Photo: Vandyk.*

Let it be granted that your mind is made up. You intend to be called. The die is cast. How should you prepare yourself for the future? I write as a member of the Common Law Bar, where advocacy still persists. It is apparent, therefore, that you must *learn to speak* with reasonable fluency, coupled with argumentative ability. My advice is to seize every opportunity for talking "on your hind legs," as the phrase goes. Join a good debating society—not one where ridiculous "points of order" obscure business. Become a member of such a body as the United Club or the Eighty Club, according to your political proclivities, and stump the country. You cannot have too much practice. It is essential that you should get used to hearing your own voice in public. And rejoice exceedingly if you suffer from nervousness *before you commence to speak*. Once your speech is begun you ought to be so interested in your subject that you lose yourself in its development. But it is certain that the man who does not suffer torments before making any oratorical effort is predestined to mediocrity. Never forget that mere fluency is a snare. Windy rhetoric never did succeed except upon the hustings. For success at the Bar there must be matter as well as manner. There must be lucidity and brevity. You may (sometimes you should) make your point thrice to a jury—never more than once to a judge. If you have one real point, discard all the minor points. The receptivity, even of the Bench, is limited.

All the time you must study, study, study. You cannot give out unless you take in. Nor should your reading be confined to law books. Knowledge of the world, of history, of letters, of poetry, of romance, is helpful. In fact, no knowledge is wasted. For an advocate has to put himself in his lay client's shoes. To-day he must be a scientist, to-morrow a greengrocer, next day an accountant, and so on *ad infinitum*. Not that you must neglect your jurisprudence. While you are a student you will have your only opportunity to acquire Law in the abstract. Hereafter you will apply Law in the concrete. Therefore prize your short time for study.

You have nearly "finished your dinners." What is the next step? Many competent advisers prescribe twelve months in a solicitor's office. This course possesses the advantage of enabling a Barrister to see the point of view of the other branch of our profession, particularly as regards the part which *Costs* play in litigation. There are judges who fail fully to appreciate the potency of Costs. Most lawsuits could be settled but for Costs.

The next twelve months should be spent in the chambers of a practising Barrister, preferably a man with a varied, but not too extensive, practice. Such a man can afford to give time and attention to his pupil's work. During this period the pupil should

devote himself unremittingly to understanding all the briefs, and especially the interlocutory work, which he finds to his hand. He should be diligent in Judges' and Masters' Chambers; also in Courts where any case which he has read and annotated is being heard. Diligence during this probationary period is as difficult as it is essential.

There may come the lure of a political career to student or to young Barrister. Eschew it as you value your future. Of course, I confine this advice to candidature for Parliament—not to helping your party on the platform. Solicitors have small use for budding Chathams. The Law is a jealous mistress.

Never write a Law book. It will not pay you, and you will thereby gain the reputation of a theoretical practitioner. What you want is that of a practical Barrister. That is why it is immaterial, and sometimes even hurtful, to gain "Honours" in examinations for the Bar. Reasonable knowledge of the Law, mastery of clear and concise expression, understanding of human nature, temper, and tact: those are the things needful.

MEANWHILE you are "called." No man can advise in the abstract, without knowing you personally, as to the next step. Influence will profit you little. Some, but not too much, independent income you should have, I think, enough to tide you over the few first difficult years. For it must be, for nearly all young Barristers, a waiting game. Happy the man to whom work comes gradually—so that "he is able to bear it." Unhappy the man to whom nepotism confides some heavy case, when, as sometimes happens, his leader is absent. Great is the fall of that junior.

To the young Common Law junior, just called, the choice is "Circuit or London?" There is much to be said for circuit, provided the man has the necessary means to go circuit and to attend some country Sessions *regularly*. Spasmodic effort and casual attendance are worse than useless. Upon all circuits (except the Northern) the work is not large, and is, as regards the junior practice, to some extent in the hands of a local Bar. Moreover, train facilities have encroached upon that *camaraderie* which once characterized circuit life. Nor are briefs handed to counsel as late as the first morning of the Assize in the haphazard manner of my youth, when one could enjoy the circuit mess with a good digestion and a clear conscience, with the remote possibility of a brief or two on the morrow. Still, I confess to a sneaking preference for the slow and tedious method of Circuit, Sessions, and County Courts. There is, however, the danger, on the other hand, that a man may build up a connection in the country which may imperil his chances of greater things in Town.

Suppose, however, that his higher ambition, or his limited finance, or both, decide him to "stick to London." I rule out the man who can specialize, whether in Commercial, Patent, Admiralty, or any other line. I am writing to help, if may be, the General Practitioner. For the beginner in this field there are the Central Criminal Court, the London and Middlesex Sessions, the Metropolitan County or Police Courts, and perhaps a chance or two at the Law Courts in the Strand. Often that opportunity comes from "devilling," viz., taking another man's case for him without fee, merely for the invaluable experience to be gained. Then there are "poor persons" cases and Dock Defences, hard, perchance, not always, for the poor person or the man in the dock, but analogous to hospital experience in the medical profession. Of one thing I am fairly confident. It is a hopeful fact. Given competence and assiduity, to ninety-nine men out of a hundred a *chance will come*. Somehow, at some time, almost every Barrister *has his chance*. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." In this analogy the solicitor represents the wind. Let the young Barrister see to it that he take his chance: it may not recur. I have seen men throw away four or five chances, mainly through laziness. But once the chance is taken, once opportunity is seized by the forelock, the man is made: I mean, he need not be counted among the failures. Whether he ever gets beyond a modest competence is another story.

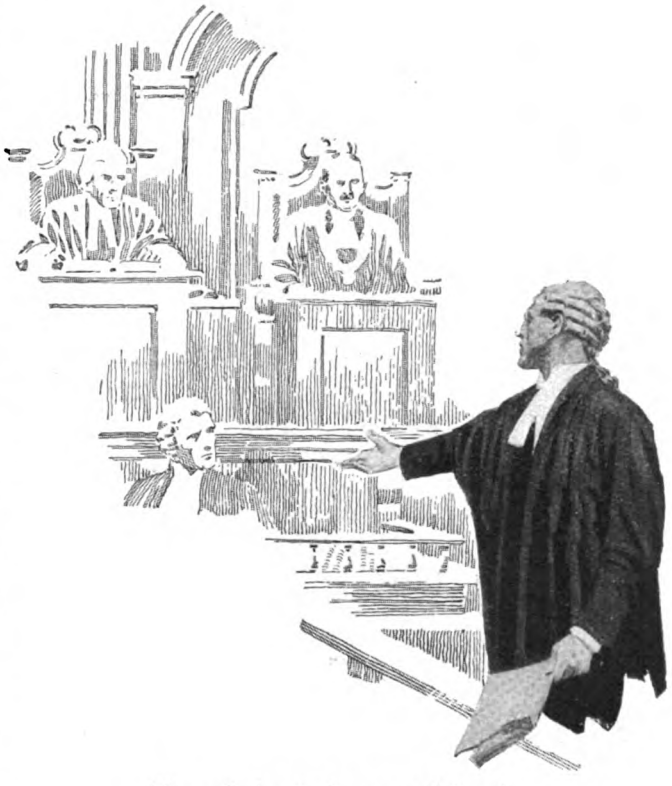
What will be the attitude of his brethren at the Bar? Much generosity commingled with a little jealousy. One can forgive something to disappointment, to hope deferred; for there are many sick hearts in our profession—and no wonder! If a junior is firm but modest; if he maintains an unruffled demeanour and a smiling face; in a word, if he "plays the game," the great brotherhood of the Bar will eventually welcome his intrusion as inevitable. To such a man a helping hand will ever be held out, even by those less fortunate whom he is passing in the race. The Bar is never backward in recognizing and encouraging merit.

Briefs have commenced to come. One thing is certain, viz., that you will have too few of them or too many. There is no "happy mean" at the Bar. As a wit once remarked, either you will have all bed and no roses, or all roses and no bed. Your leisure will be too much or too little. How, then, are you to face the excess of work?

By concentration coupled with the knack of throwing your briefs aside and forgetting that such things as briefs exist. Never go to bed, however late the hour, without an intervening interval between the cessation of work and the wooing of sleep. Play a game of patience or read a light novel after the evening's work is finished. Thus you can prepare for tolerable dreams.

Another practical hint. Don't over-fag your brain by working too late. Remember that what matters most is that you should be a *fit man in the morning*. Better to understudy your facts than not to be alert when you have to face judge and witness and opposing counsel. Over-preparation is inimical to success. Until you see the witnesses you cannot correctly ascertain what the facts are. Paper can tell you little, while instructions are apt to mislead.

Careful conferences are most serviceable. Never, if it can be avoided, defer your conference until the last half-hour. That will give no time for details to be filled in. You will find that the most devoted member of the legal profession is the solicitor's managing clerk. Upon his patience and assiduity the main structure of a case often depends. Give him his chance.



**How alluring to be arrayed in wig and gown——!**

Above all, never permit yourself to get into a groove. Don't become a mere lawyer. Cultivate other friendships and other activities than the confines of the Inns of Court provide. Spend your vacations for choice with laymen. The bigger your world the more a man of the world will you become. This can be done without in any way severing your life from the pulsating life of your glorious profession. Never bore your wife with "shop," but consult her when you want a sound judgment upon matters of fact.

Keep yourself physically and mentally in the prime of condition. Exercise both muscles and brains. Consider the judges and other lawyers who have risen to eminence. Then you will admit how great a factor the physique plays in forensic success. An equal factor is mental balance. Whether you are or are not destined to adorn the Bench, always cultivate well-balanced judgment.

Prizes? They are, after all, but for a handful of us.

Social service? That is for *all* of us, and what a glorious service our unique profession renders to society. Just think! We monopolize the right of audience in His Majesty's Courts of Justice. Thereby we have helped to assure the liberty and the equality of the subject. For a nominal fee (in a pauper case for no fee at all) every citizen can receive adequate representation when his cause is arguable or his person is in peril.

There is one Law for poor and rich alike. That consummation has been brought about by the jury system (which some would undermine) and by our profession. So to you, young man or woman, aspirant for a call to the Bar, I, who have been for many years in the profession, venture to say this, which is more fundamental than any of the random jottings aforesaid: place in the forefront of your aspiration the single-

minded desire to do your own small part in maintaining the standard of British justice in our land. This you can best do by resolving to uphold the honour of a profession which, whatever cynics may say or write about it, always has been a sure and certain safeguard for an independent and ordered Democracy.

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V.

# BANKING.

By

## O. E. E. WOOD, M.A., LL.B.

*(Midland Bank, Limited).*

UNLESS a boy is willing to work hard and to work enthusiastically, he had better not seek to enter the banking world. It means steady and continuous application in the effort to attain a knowledge that should be almost encyclopædic in order to cope with the multifarious problems of a banker's daily life.

If the *bank clerk* desires in later years to develop into the *banker* his mental and personal traits should be such as to enable him to carry with ease the heavy responsibility involved in his position as a moral trustee for the public and the traders of the country. These qualities, comprising on the one hand tact and enthusiasm and all that is meant by that rather vague word "personality," and on the other hand the habit of thinking and arguing out things for oneself on a wide scale and of adjusting one's mind with agility to the manifold daily problems of a banker's life, should carry one through the difficult early years to ultimate success.

The remarks that follow apply more particularly to the five large joint-stock banks known as the "big five," viz., the Midland, Lloyds, Barclays, Westminster, and the National Provincial Bank, these being the institutions which, in nine cases out of ten, the applicant would approach; but as conditions of entry and service vary slightly in each case, it must be understood that the observations that follow are of design quite general in character.

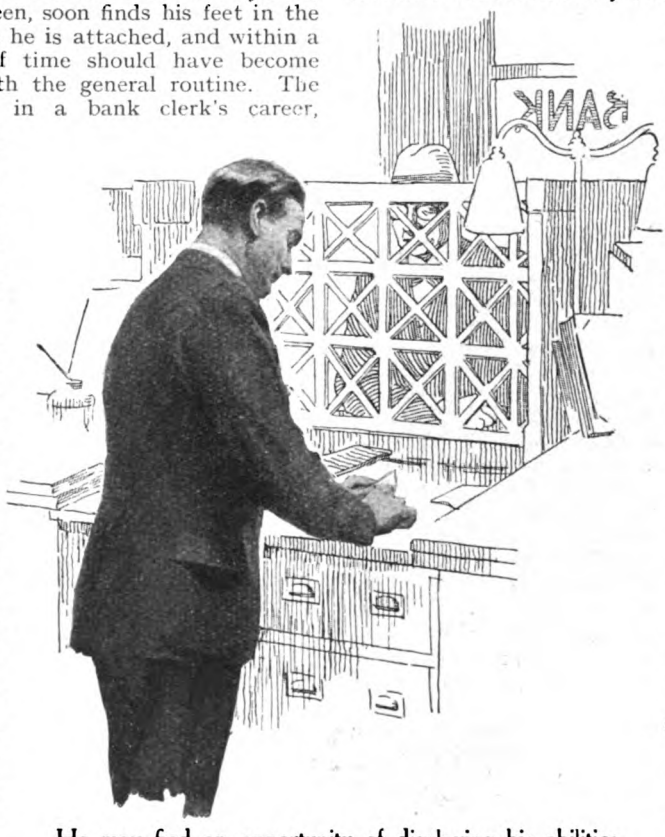
As these institutions are constantly seeking to recruit their personnel from the most promising sources, they have set up a high educational standard for candidates, as evidenced either in a special entrance examination or by past academic distinctions. Moreover, the suitability of each candidate is estimated at a personal interview with an official of the bank.

Mr. O. E. E. Wood, M.A.

When a suitable vacancy occurs a youth who has passed the necessary tests enters upon a period of probation at the head office or one of the branch offices of the bank, either in London or the country, every effort being made to place him near his home. It is of primary importance that a clerk should sit for the Associate Examination held by the Institute of Bankers, and he should, in addition, utilize to the fullest extent any educational facilities provided by his own bank.

We may now turn our attention to the youth's actual work in

the bank, and consider the openings for one who shows himself of more than common calibre. There is a very prevalent belief that a junior clerk commencing in a bank is subjected during the hours indicated on the plate at the bank entrance to the monotonous experience of adding up unending columns of figures. Like most popular impressions, this one sadly errs from the truth. The raw junior, especially if keen, soon finds his feet in the office to which he is attached, and within a short space of time should have become conversant with the general routine. The earlier duties in a bank clerk's career, although of a comparatively modest description, are of very vital importance to a lad's future. Experience shows that whoever does the small things in life well is going to maintain that standard of efficiency in the future. Such perfection attained in the preliminary stages of training will probably be reflected in his character, and in later years, when he has more important duties to perform, he will never be satisfied unless such duties are carried out with the same accuracy and efficiency as he achieved in the earlier days of his banking experience.




**He may find an opportunity of displaying his abilities as a cashier.**

After his preliminary training the bank clerk is ready to undertake responsibility, and in course of time he may find an opportunity of displaying his abilities as a cashier and so of coming into personal contact with the public. In this position presence and personality are of vital importance, and a clerk who justifies the confidence reposed in him may find it merely a stepping-stone to higher things. If he has a marked ability for organizing, and displays a competent knowledge of the bank book-keeping system, he may become chief clerk at a branch. In this position the responsibility of the whole of the general office organization will devolve upon him, and his manager will soon be able to estimate his qualities. When a man has made good in this position he may reasonably expect rapid promotion, either to the managership of one of the numerous new branches which are continually being opened or possibly to a post as assistant manager at a branch which is already well established.

On the whole, the prospects of promotion in a bank are quite as good and probably better than in the majority of similar commercial occupations, especially for a man who is determined to equip himself properly and to justify himself in whatever work he may be occupied. In the earlier days of banking a good many of the well-known bankers began their careers as men of means, but the situation is entirely changed as the result of the great development of joint-stock banking since the establishment of the first joint-stock bank in London nearly a hundred years ago. A large proportion of those responsible for shaping the policy of our big banks are men who have risen from the ranks to the highest executive positions through ability and hard work, and in the banking world the way is always open for the ambitious and capable man. One sees frequent announcements of the appointment to important positions of men who started at the very beginning as junior clerks on leaving school.

It may be said that the number of these appointments is very few, and that in view of the size of bank staffs the possibility of

an obscure clerk obtaining an important head office position, for example, is very remote. To some extent this is true, but it is no more true than of other professions, such as the Law and Medicine. In these cases the number of those reaching the top of their profession is very small, but every barrister newly called to the Bar and every doctor who has just qualified has an equal chance, and the best man will generally in course of time assert his superiority. It is the same in banking, and the junior clerk to-day is the possible general manager of to-morrow.

This prospect, however, is one that most people cannot hope to realize, and yet there are many other opportunities for the man of more than average ability. As I have mentioned before, the big banks are opening new branches almost every day, and if a man appointed to one of these branches makes good use of his opportunities, he may reasonably anticipate promotion at a later date to a more important branch in one of the large industrial towns. The member of the staff who becomes a branch manager has the opportunity of utilizing in his everyday work the practical and theoretical knowledge he has slowly acquired, and if he discharges his duties well he will soon come under the notice of head office. From the managerial staff appointments are from time to time made to the minor head office positions, and an official who is offered one of these may find that it is the first step towards a higher executive post. The ramifications of a large joint-stock bank are now so extensive and its functions have increased so greatly that the members of its staff have the strongest possible inducement to acquire special qualifications in addition to the general training given in an ordinary branch.

From a detached point of view, then, the banking profession offers chances of promotion which may, relatively to other occupations, be described as good. There is no rigorous system of staff grading, such as exists in the Civil Service, in which it is quite the exception for a man in one grade, after attaining the highest position therein, to be promoted to the grade above. In a bank every junior clerk has an excellent chance of making in due course a competent living, and the possibility of something better if he shows sufficient ability. The managers of branches are required to report periodically on the progress of each member of their staff, and these reports are recorded in a special department at head office formed to deal solely with staff matters. This department is organized under the staff manager in such a way as to facilitate collation of the branch managers' reports with other independent information, supplemented by the personal knowledge which the staff manager obtains in the usual course of his duties.

It is obvious that with the increasing centralization ensuing from frequent amalgamations some such system as the above is absolutely necessary if a fair judgment is to be made of the individual members of a staff numbering several thousands. The greatest efforts are made to secure a just estimate, as far as humanly possible, of the capabilities of each man. In this way even the youngest member of the staff need not feel that he is submerged, unheard of and unnoticed, a single molecule in an inexhaustible sea. If he shows that he has faculties worth encouraging he will, in time, notice in many small ways that those above him are quietly observing his progress, and opportunities will be given him to increase his practical experience of the various phases of the bank's work. Should he be a man possessed of only average ability and power of application, he will find that banks offer, in return for steady, hard work, terms of service that are probably unequalled. A man of this type working in a small office for a private employer would probably be dissatisfied with his salary, and would be subject to the constant fear of dismissal in slack times. A bank offers to this average man a fair and adequate salary, and, moreover, the nature of banking is such that it is essential for a bank to maintain its staff of fully-trained men when trade is at a low ebb in order to provide for the volume of business consequent upon a further turn in the wheel of the trade cycle. In other words, it pays a bank to offer its *employés* the advantage of security of tenure. No man need fear dismissal except in the very remote event of the liquidation of the institution in which he is employed, or as a consequence of his own misconduct.

THESE considerations are not the only points wherein banking offers a decidedly attractive opening. A man burdened with family responsibilities has little opportunity to make an adequate provision for old age, and in view of this the English banks have formulated schemes whereby liberal pensions are provided at the retiring age, which in most cases is fixed at a lower limit of sixty years and a higher limit of sixty-five years. These pension schemes are in most cases non-contributory. Many banks, in addition, have a contributory scheme making provision for the widow or dependents of a member of the staff in the event of his premature decease, and in the case of at least one of the five big banks the staff themselves have organized a very attractive sickness

and accident fund and a mutual life assurance fund. An efficient member of the staff, moreover, may very often rely upon the generosity of the bank to help him fight against unforeseen misfortune. There is an old controversy as to whether a corporation like a bank has a personality, but in dealing with its staff it certainly has a conscience.

In this review of banking as a career it has only been possible to give the briefest indication of its merits and demerits, and many details have been omitted which may be obtained on application to the bank staff managers, who, moreover, are always willing to give help and advice. Enough has been said, however, to show that in the case of an intelligent boy just leaving school his advisers might do much worse than consider the prospects offered by banking.

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VI.

# The METROPOLITAN POLICE.

By

## Brigadier-General SIR W. T. F. HORWOOD,

K.C.B., D.S.O.

(*Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis*).

I.

THE "London" for which the Metropolitan Police Force is responsible extends from Staines to Erith, and from Potter's Bar to Epsom. It comprises an area of about seven hundred square miles, and contains over seven million people. Into its docks are poured vast quantities of merchandise, the treasures of East and West are offered for sale in its streets, irreplaceable works of art are fearlessly displayed in its museums and picture galleries, whilst among its inhabitants are many private individuals whose possessions rival in value the proverbial "King's ransom."

To this treasure house the criminal turns with eagerness and hope. If strength or brain has won such wealth, may not violence and cunning be similarly rewarded?

To protect London, but more especially that every citizen may pass "on his lawful occasion" in peace and safety, a force of over twenty thousand police is employed, whose business it is to "keep watch and ward" unceasingly. And so unbroken is the peace of the Metropolis, so accustomed are its people to the most absolute freedom, that any unexpected interference with their movements or their personal liberty, however slight, is a matter for profound astonishment. In the case of the unreflecting such interference may result in a complaint in the form of a letter to a favourite newspaper, or may even acquire the dignity of a question in Parliament.

Brig.-Gen. Sir W T. F. Horwood, K.C.B.

*Photo: Bassano.*

London's police is regarded as the premier force of the world. It maintains its position not by ruthlessness, as in some forces, but by its efficiency. Its power over the corporate life of the Metropolis is not terrorist, but is due to the respect in which it is held. Not only are the methods of the Metropolitan Police adopted, generally, abroad, but the officers themselves are frequently loaned, or transferred, to other countries in order to organize police forces which may have failed to control the criminal element or win the respect of the peoples concerned.

What of the future? Is the profession of the policeman likely to be superseded? Will some specific from Geneva put a new and different heart

in London's criminal classes, so that only the control of traffic shall fall upon the police? And shall that traffic control be reduced to a mechanical tower device imported from New York or Chicago? All history teaches the contrary. The more civilized a nation becomes, the more complex

**Policemen in the making—accepted candidates undergoing a course of training before being appointed as constables.**

*Photo: "Daily Chronicle."*

its life, the greater is the call for police officers, whose numbers must keep abreast of the new and additional duties imposed upon them. Moreover, a high proportion of the members of the Force must out-distance in intelligence and in ability the criminal types which that civilization itself produces.

For these reasons the Metropolitan Police Force offers a wonderful future to the better type of young Englishmen. Its officers are paid on a liberal scale. The possibilities of promotion for all are unequalled in any other similar profession. Every opportunity is given to develop the mind and the body, and provision is made not only for ill-health, but for all those accidents which, overtaking a man in the pursuit of his profession, in every other calling spell disaster to his dependents.

What sort of man do we want for the Metropolitan Police?

*"They take him from the village and the plough,*
*And dress him up in uniform so neat!"*

may have been true of the old-time Army recruit, but it is inadequate if applied to the Metropolitan Police. It is, of course, generally understood that only strong, active, intelligent men are considered. But we want more than this, and the pay and prospects of the Metropolitan Police have been improved in order that the right men may be attracted to our ranks. We must have men of character, with that conception of duty which will make them not only resolute in danger, but will keep them honest in the abounding temptations of a policeman's life. Can we entrust the safety of London, its wealth, the care of its children and its infirm, the control of its criminals to any lower type? And not only are these normal police duties to be performed, but there is given to the Metropolitan Police the added honour of the protection of the Royal Family and of the Cabinet, including personal attendance on the Sovereign.

## PAY AND PROSPECTS.

The question which every intelligent man asks himself in selecting a career is, "What do I get out of it—now and in the future?"

The Metropolitan Police Force offers the following:—

*Rates of Pay, Uniform Branch.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Constables.. .. | 70s. to 90s. per week. |
| Sergeants .. .. | 100s. to 120s. per week. |
| Inspectors .. .. | 125s. to 193s. per week. |
| Superintendents .. | £550 to £700 per annum. |

Quarters are provided whenever possible, and when they are not available monetary assistance is given towards payment of rent.

Officers appointed for duty with the Criminal Investigation Department receive weekly allowances, according to rank, in addition to the rates of pay shown.

The accepted candidate, before being

appointed as a constable, undergoes a course of training in a preparatory class for a period of not less than nine weeks, during which time he resides at the Section House, and receives pay at the rate of sixty shillings per week. On joining the Force he receives seventy shillings per week.

In what other profession is a man paid sixty shillings a week whilst being tested as to his fitness for the job he seeks ?

Athletic amusements of all kinds are encouraged, and every assistance is given to the men to take an active part in these pursuits. Libraries, reading rooms, recreation and billiard rooms are provided in the various stations, and equipped with every necessity, at no cost to the men. Bands have been established in many of the divisions, and men who have musical abilities can find scope for their development and enjoyment. Free medical attendance is provided for the whole of the Force, and convalescent homes exist for the treatment of men recovering from serious diseases. The Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage provides for the children of men who die in the service. There is a well-endowed fund for the relief of cases of distress arising from illness or domestic trouble, and there is also a fund from which grants are made to widows in case of need, over and above any pension or gratuities to which they may be entitled from the Police Fund.

London's police is regarded as the premier force of the world.

**PROMOTION.**

The prospects of advancement for men who show the necessary aptitude for the work are extremely good. Promotion for such men is rapid, enabling them to secure a good position after comparatively short service.

The officers of the Force up to the rank of Chief Constable are selected, without exception, from among the men themselves. It may be of interest to know that four out of the six Chief Constables at present serving have risen from the ranks, whilst an Assistant Commissioner (Sir James Olive, K.B.E.) was once a police-constable, having passed through each successive rank until he reached a position second only to that of the Commissioner himself.

It will be seen that the service thus provides every intelligent man who is anxious to get on with unequalled opportunities for improving his position, and enables him to provide adequately for the responsibilities connected with the establishment of a home in London.

**PENSION.**

In addition to the advantages above enumerated, there is a liberal pension given sufficiently early in life to enable it to be enjoyed whilst the recipient is still in his prime. In fact, pensions for life are granted to all men qualifying on a more liberal scale and enjoyable at an earlier age than can be obtained in any other service. The following represent the maximum pensions which are given :—

| *Rank.* | *Amount of Pension.* £ | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constable .. | 164 | 13 | 4 | per annum. |
| Sergeant .. .. | 195 | 0 | 0 | ,, |
| Station Sergeant | 208 | 0 | 0 | ,, |
| Inspector .. | 251 | 6 | 8 | ,, |
| Sub-Divisional Inspector .. | 280 | 16 | 0 | ,, |
| Chief Inspector .. | 334 | 10 | 8 | ,, |
| Superintendent .. | 466 | 13 | 4 | ,, |

The greatest advantage of the pension scale is that it absolutely secures an adequate provision for life for any man who may be unfitted for work as the result of injury arising in, or in consequence of, the execution of his duty as a policeman. From the moment a man becomes a constable he is so protected. If he should be injured on duty and incapacitated in even the first week of his service, he would receive a pension for the rest of his life proportionate to the nature of the injury and the degree of disablement. In the event of any officer losing his life as the result of an injury on duty his widow receives a pension, and allowances are made to his children until they are sixteen years of age. A pension is granted to widows of all men who die from any cause at any time after the completion of five years' service in the Force, or after being pensioned from the Force.

### THE MEN REQUIRED.

A candidate for the Metropolitan Police must be a British subject and of pure British descent, over twenty and under twenty-seven years of age, stand five feet nine inches without shoes or stockings, able to read and write, and must show reasonable proficiency in writing from dictation and simple arithmetic. He must, in addition, possess a strong constitution, be physically equal to the performance of police duty, free from any bodily complaint, and be of unblemished character.

## II.
## "MY NEIGHBOUR AS MYSELF."

NO man can join the Metropolitan Police Force and remain unaffected in his personal habits and in his outlook on life.

The constable-to-be enters a condition of life where the recognition of authority is all-important. Order and orderliness are stamped upon every part of the police machine, and the eagerness with which men, whose lives hitherto may have been aimless, if not chaotic, respond to this change is no small tribute to the administration of the Force. The constable must be given a free hand in his work if he is to be equal to the emergencies with which he is daily confronted, but all his duties are covered by definite direction. From the first day of service he is aware that his surroundings bear an ordered relation to each other and to himself. He becomes accustomed to order, and, by easy stages, obedience to authority becomes a physical habit, if not an attitude of mind.

The influence which brings about this change in the life of the young constable is "discipline"—a word which is unpopular in some quarters. But "discipline" is much wronged—it is not, and may never involve, punishment in any shape or form; its operation is uniformly in the direction of the well-being of the Force; it is as much an agency for securing reward for good service as for restraining a man who does wrong, because discipline seeks primarily the improvement of the man and, through him, of the Force itself. If at any time, through weakness or neglect, the discipline of the Force may be impaired, with it will decline, inevitably and automatically, the efficiency of the Force and the self-respect of the men.

What would London be like if only one per cent. of the Force on duty in the streets became "hot and bothered" when faced with the daily or hourly emergency? How many Londoners have ever seen more than the end of the leather strap of the policeman's truncheon?

The contribution of the Metropolitan Police officer to the common weal is no mean one. For to-day is characterized by a restlessness and, in some quarters, an insubordination to authority unknown before the war. It follows that a greater responsibility than ever rests on the police. The constable works his beat as courteous and good-tempered in the squalid courts of the East-end as in the crowded streets of the West. He stands alone, unarmed and unsupported, in districts where hostility to any form of restraint is thinly veiled. He is subject more than most public servants to temptation—temptation all the more subtle because most commonly presented as an expression of friendliness and good-fellowship.

The *rôle* played by the police-constable is to preserve the amenities of common life for the enjoyment of all and sundry, irrespective of rank or condition. He plays a part in civic life over and above that for which he is paid; he does it willingly and without ostentation, because—and all London understands the term—he is a "decent fellow."

*Next month: "Medicine and Surgery," by Sir William Willcox; "The Army," Authenticated and Approved by the Secretary of State for War; and "Journalism," by Sir Robert Lynn.*

# Treasure Trove

By

# HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

*ILLUSTRATED BY S. BRIAULT*

I.

CUMINE OLD HALL had been long advertised for sale in *Country Life* and other papers. The photograph of the ancient house, as seen from the small park, was beguiling (as the agents well knew), too beguiling, inasmuch as it roused in buyers an expectation that, subsequently, was left unsatisfied. Mr. Cumine asked a reasonable price for his property, although even he admitted that it was shockingly out of repair and lacking in modern improvements. For many years Mr. Cumine had said to his daughter, Désirée, "It will last my time." Désirée would then nod cheerfully, keeping her thoughts to herself. Old fathers cannot be expected to understand young daughters. Désirée was twenty-one, and Mr. Cumine strolled placidly upon the shady side of sixty. He had married late in life a charming Frenchwoman, and his wife had died when Désirée was born. When she was blooming into womanhood, a fond father waxed optimistic. He loved his old house and his young daughter. She—so he reasoned—would restore the house and the fortunes of the family by marrying the right man. Nearly all impoverished fathers indulge in such pleasant dreams. How many of them come true?

Désirée chose what Mr. Cumine considered the wrong man, a rising journalist, who was—if you believed him—blossoming into a novelist. He didn't belong to any county family; he looked a gentleman and behaved like one. That was enough for Désirée. Without consulting her father, she became "engaged" to Mr. Adney, who, ardent youth, boldly asked Mr. Cumine for Désirée's hand. He claimed modestly that he was in a position to support her. Mr. Cumine was unable to agree with him upon this important point.

"Can you make any settlement on my daughter?"

"No, sir, I can't. Can you?"

It was anxiously asked, this question, with no taint of levity or impertinence.

"I am sadly crippled," replied Mr. Cumine. "When I die, and I have every intention of living as long as possible, what I have will belong to Désirée. From the way we live here you can form your own opinion of what I have *not* got."

He chuckled, eyeing the young man with whimsical benevolence.

"If you will allow me to say so," he continued, agreeably, "you ought to seek out and find some young lady, or indeed a lady not too young, who can supplement your rather precarious income. You have good looks and an ingratiating smile. I say to you in all frankness and good temper: 'Look elsewhere.'"

Mr. Cumine spoke with finality.

The affair—as viewed by an affectionate and considerate sire—was the more unfortunate and inopportune because Mr. Adney happened to be the local parson's son. Happily, he did not live at home. He lived and worked near Fleet Street. He collogued with Désirée, after taking respectful leave of her father.

"We are up against it," he declared, ruefully.

"I suppose we are," said Désirée. "You see, Bobbie, I believe in you. Daddy doesn't. He's a dear, and so are you. If he happened to be the sort of waxy, impossible parent that one reads about in novels, everything would be so easy."

Copyright, 1926, by Horace Annesley Vachell.

"Would it, darling? In what way?"

Désirée replied, firmly:—

"I should pack my things—that wouldn't take long—march out of Old Hall, and marry you."

"What a sunbeam!"

"Because Daddy is such a dear, I can't do that. It wouldn't be cricket. Evidently what impressed me about you has not impressed Daddy. Your great asset is—initiative."

If it be initiative to make hot love with the odds against you, Désirée was right, but she was not thinking of that. Bobbie, from birth, had been ear-marked as a parson by the good vicar and his wife. To that end they had "pinched" so as to secure for their son the advantages of a University education. Bobbie had helped himself to these advantages. Incidentally, he had become assistant editor, and finally editor in chief, of *Granta*. Thence he had easily drifted into Fleet Street, where he was slowly "making good."

"My initiative, darling, has not helped me much with my own people."

"Bobbie, why aren't you a real estate agent?"

"That seems to me an irrelevant remark."

"No. Selling our place has become a sort of obsession with Daddy. If you sold it——"

"If I sold it——?"

They stared at each other.

"If I could buy it and restore it, and then invite you to remain mistress of it, why then—there might be lively times in our little market. A working journalist has to scrap all 'ifs.'"

"All the same," persisted Désirée, "if you, with your initiative, could find a buyer, Daddy would be tremendously impressed."

"I don't believe he wants to sell."

"He does. If I had been a boy——"

"Thank Heaven, you are not."

"Cumines, male Cumines, have always lived at Old Hall. Daddy exists. He would be quite comfortably off if he sold."

"I suppose he would," said Mr. Adney, carelessly.

He spoke lightly, but, without another word to Désirée, he felt himself challenged. If he had initiative, and he fondly believed this great gift was his, surely it should be "on tap" in such an exigency, a flowing well, a fountain of endeavour. He could hear his sprightly mistress, as she continued:—

"Yes; Daddy gets less than two per cent. on his land; the dear old house eats up cash in repairs. If he could sell for, say, twenty thousand pounds, why then, at seven per cent., we should have a gross income of fourteen hundred a year, not counting what he has in other securities, say six hundred a year. With two thousand a year he would be passing rich."

Mr. Adney nodded and presently went his way.

INSPIRATION came to him at his desk from no less a person than the Assistant Editor. Mr. Adney and other gentlemen who write with ease (but not at ease), worked in a room described by the Editor as the "lethal chamber," a large room with a huge horseshoe table in it upon which were inkpots, blotting paper, and countless sheets of foolscap. In this room the learned clerks wrote to order, an order rooted in disorder. The name explained itself; originality perished in this room. The Editor imposed upon his staff *his* ideas, *his* policy. "I am an echo," Mr. Adney had reflected, "nothing more." It was some consolation to reflect that he echoed a voice that was heard by millions. Each morning a babe was born in the great building after indescribable groanings and travailings; and it was delivered, more or less punctually, before breakfast. Another babe had to be conceived before the formes went to press at two the next morning——! Under such circumstances can originality live and flourish save in the panelled seclusion of the Editor's sanctuary?

"Adney," said the Sub-Chief, "do you know anything about Treasure Trove?"

"Not a thing."

"Good! Nobody does. I want eight hundred words on the elusive subject. Go into the library, dig out the facts, and let me have the muck at once."

"Right," said Mr. Adney.

He plunged forthwith into the library, an adjoining room, where (*inter alia*), ready for instant use, reposed the obituary notices of celebrities, and every book of ready reference that has been published. An acolyte, shingled and in an exiguous skirt, flitted to Bobbie's assistance. The facts were dug out. Mr. Adney returned to the lethal chamber. He filled his quill, which wasn't a quill but a fountain pen, and held it poised as he considered an arresting opening sentence.

"*Treasure Trove warms the cockles of every heart.*"

Mr. Adney was far from pleased with this affirmation. His Chief demanded "facts," but it was understood in the lethal chamber that fiction cleverly disguised as fact was the "stuff to give the troops."

Mr. Adney chuckled as he erased his opening line. He did his job and sent it in. The Sub-Chief sent for him some few minutes

later. This Olympian had a tiny room of his own, which held an immense desk, littered with papers, cuttings, and pamphlets, and a lady typist whose face was like a last year's bird's nest.

"This isn't what I wanted, Adney."

"Sorry, sir. Scrap—and at it again."

"No; I like it; it's provocative; but you didn't dig this out of the library, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Is it a true story?"

"It might be true."

"I shall shove it in."

And "in" it went.

II.

INCIDENTALLY, Mr. Adney knew his Editor (at a respectful distance), and that Editor's public. Primarily, newspapers are published to please the public, not to educate them, as in the days of the great Delane. With us education curtsies to circulation.

Two days later the Editor sent for Mr. Adney.

"That article of yours on Treasure Trove has brought me a stack of letters. I am tempted to publish some of them. I have just read your article. Of its literary merit the less said the better. But it is, I admit, a startling note of interrogation. You hint, in no uncertain terms, that there is a manor house, not far from London, *and advertised for sale cheap*—clever touch that—which holds treasure."

"That is perfectly true, sir."

"Gold?"

"Yes, sir."

"You hint, Adney, that some enterprising man, or men—a syndicate is indicated by you—might discover this property and buy it. Treasure hunts happen to be the rage at the moment. It would not surprise me, after reading some of these letters, to hear that cars, from the lordly Rolls-Royce to the ubiquitous Ford, are scouring our home counties at this moment, trying to find this ancient manor and the treasure which is hidden in it."

"That, sir," said Mr. Adney, modestly, "was the idea."

The Editor laughed.

"I ask no more questions; I shall publish some of these letters. Hop it!"

III.

A WEEK passed.

Mr. Cumine read two papers—*The Times* and *The Morning Post*. Désirée, being in love with Bobbie, read *The Daily Banner* and prided herself upon being able to pick out of it Bobbie's "stuff." Oddly enough, she failed on this occasion to identify the article on Treasure Trove as his. Guile informed it; guile made Mr. Adney dissemble his style. Any person of ordinary intelligence reading the article would have said: "This has been written by an archæologist who, obviously, is not a treasure hunter, but some lean and slippered pantaloon. In his wanderings among long-forgotten quartos he has found a cipher which reveals the existence of treasure hidden in a house rapidly falling to decay." Accordingly, if Désirée read the article, she dismissed it from her mind as negligible. She ought, it may be contended, to have recognized her own home from the description of it, but she was searching at the time for Bobbie's prose and youthfully indifferent to the prose of others.

The lovers met.

Désirée was much excited.

"It's an extraordinary thing, Bobbie, but dozens of people have been looking at our house. They come, with or without 'orders to view'; they poke about; they ask questions; they seem—excited. Daddy is quite flustered."

"What questions do these people ask?"

"Oh, the age of the house, how long we have lived here, and if we have any old books or documents dealing with the history of the house. Daddy, of course, is rather short with them. Why are you smiling?"

"I—well, I felt that he would be. I hate answering impertinent questions. The place is for sale. Let people come and look at it. If they want it, it's theirs at the price, a very low price."

"That is exactly what Daddy says. He refuses to see these people; he turns them over to me."

"He would; and you—how do you treat them?"

"I humour them. Gracious! Here's another car rolling up. We had three this morning."

The lovers were on the lawn, within sight of the gravel drive, sadly in need of more gravel. Indeed, the disconcerting conviction that Old Hall was vocal in its mute appeal for reparations struck intending purchasers like a slap in the face.

"Come with me," whispered Désirée. "You can help me a lot. How disgustingly rich these people look!"

Three middle-aged gentlemen were getting out of a superb saloon car. Spring was afoot in Buckinghamshire; blackbirds and thrushes were fluting in the overgrown shrubberies where rhododendrons had reverted to *Ponticum*; the ambient air was soft and balmy. And yet these three gentlemen wore coats with collars and cuffs of costly

fur; they smoked big cigars; they looked unnecessarily well-nourished.

"City birds," whispered Mr. Adney.

"Looking for worms," whispered back Désirée. "Why did we use worm-killer on our lawns?"

The most opulent of the three—and the owner of the car—presented himself and his friends.

"I am Mr. Reuben Colquhoun. This," he lisped slightly, "ith Mr. Isidore Gordon und Mr. Adalbert Lenox, my partners—Colquhoun, Gordon, and Lenox, of Montrose House."

"I am Miss Cumine. This is Mr. Adney. You have come to see Old Hall?"

"Pleath."

Mr. Colquhoun waved an order to view which Désirée waved aside. The party entered the house after glancing keenly at the thick walls. Mr. Colquhoun stared hard at Mr. Adney; he had never seen him before; but he recognized in him intelligence and honesty. Mr. Colquhoun had inherited a nose from his father and a slanting smile from his mother. When the smile slanted up the nose went down to meet it. He smiled at Désirée and sniffed at Mr. Adney. It occurred to him that Mr. Adney might be interested in treasure.

Désirée explained that her father was in the library, into which they could peep presently. Charmed by her agreeable manners and deportment, Mr. Gordon, the youngest of the three, moved to her side. Mr. Lenox, not to be outdone in politeness, joined Mr. Gordon. Mr. Colquhoun was left alone with Mr. Adney.

"You know this house, Mr. Adenoid?"

"Adney, sir. Yes; I am the local parson's son. I have played hide-and-seek all

The most opulent of the three presented himself and his friends.

over it with Miss Cumine, when we were children."

"Hide-und-seek, yeth. We go on playing that game, *hein?* so long as we lif, what?"

Désirée pressed on with her two cavaliers; Mr. Colquhoun followed slowly, asking questions, innocent questions, answered in like innocence by Mr. Adney.

"Family ith old, yeth?"

"Old, and once rich. The Cumines owned a dozen parishes. Acre by acre the land has slipped away."

"Und the money, too?"

"Strictly between ourselves, it is a mystery where the money went, but, forgive me, I am boring you."

"No; you were thaying——"

"I was about to make a wild guess, but again pardon me, a man of substance, like yourself, can hardly be interested in shadows."

Mr. Colquhoun, now out of ear-shot of the others, said emphatically:—

"All my life, young man, I make money by guessing where money ith. I am a good guesser, yeth. Go on—you intereth me."

"You must have read," said Bobbie gravely, "a short article that appeared some ten days ago in *The Daily Banner*. Again strictly between ourselves, I want to tell you that Mr. Cumine has not read that article, nor has Miss Cumine."

"You don't thay tho?"

"I do. More, it would be indiscreet to speak of that article before them."

"Yeth."

"Unquestionably, somebody has been guessing, as—as I did. I would stake all I have, which isn't much, that there *is* treasure in this old house."

"Shush-h-h!" enjoined Mr. Colquhoun, and his smile slanted more than ever. Mr. Adney lowered the tone of his voice.

"But, apart from that, the property is worth the money asked."

"The price ith high, Mr. Adenoid."

"Adney. The land lies high, five hundred feet above sea-level. Considered residentially, not agriculturally, the land, if subdivided and sold as building lots, would pay for the whole property and leave the house, the park, and the gardens in the purchaser's hands Mr. Cumine is considering half-a-dozen offers, all of which shade his price; a firm offer of twenty thousand would secure the property. If I had the money I'd buy it to-day."

"Maybe," Mr. Colquhoun observed slyly, "you are in the real-ethtate buthneth; maybe, I thay, you have thith property on your books."

Mr. Adney assured him that it was not so with such sincerity of utterance, with a countenance so free from guile, that Mr. Colquhoun apologized quite handsomely.

"We will join the others," he said, "but I should like, young man, to make your better acquaintance, *hein?* Dine with me to-morrow, if you have no engagement."

"You are very kind, sir."

"I lif in Hyde Park Square, number one hundred and ninety-seven, a corner houthe. Shall we thay eight-thirty?"

"I shall be delighted."

They joined the others; they went over the house; they peeped into the library without disturbing Mr. Cumine; they strolled through the gardens. And then they rolled away, after thanking Miss Cumine too profusely for showing them over such a charming house and garden. As the great car purred down the drive, Désirée said mournfully:—

"They don't mean business."

"Colquhoun," said Mr. Adney thoughtfully, "is a Scotch name; so is Gordon, so is Lenox. A Scot means business when he never mentions it. Cheerio!"

## IV.

AT eight-thirty to the tick, Mr. Adney presented himself at the corner house in Hyde Park Square. A butler, who would have been an ornament to the House of Lords, ushered him into a snug smoking-room, where his host received him graciously. When the nobleman reappeared with a brace of cocktails, Mr. Colquhoun said in his Scots accent:—

"We dine mit ourselufs. You like to drink a Rheingau hock?"

"Whatever pleases your palate, sir."

They dined sumptuously. After dinner, coffee, old brandy, and cigars were served in the smoking-room. As Mr. Colquhoun pinched tenderly the end of his cigar he said, in business-like accents:—

"Life ith dear to all of uth. Tell me, my young friendt, why you told me that you stake your life that there ith treasure in Old Hall?"

"Simply because I know there is."

"Und why do you tell me, a stranger, information which a clever young man would keep to himseluf, *hein?*"

"Because I hoped that information of no value to me might be of value to Mr. Colquhoun, whom I cannot regard altogether as a stranger."

Scots may be a dour race, but they are susceptible to flattery. A smile flickered upward to meet a long nose and downward to meet a triple chin. Between the two it was lost.

"Tell me, then—between ourselufs—what you know."

"On terms?"

"Terms? *Lieber Gott!* What terms?"

"I am a writer. I employ an agent. To be frank with you, he doesn't make much out of me. Still, I pay him a ten per cent. commission on sales. Shall we say five per cent. to me, if you buy Cumine Old Hall?"

**"Why do you tell me, a stranger, information which a clever young man would keep to himseluf, hein?"**

"Yeth—if—if I find the treasure there."

"It's there right enough."

"Soh! You intrigue me, Mithter Adney. *Himmel!* if you know where the treasure ith, why do you not find it yourseluf, eh?"

"The treasure, sir, is *in* the house; it belongs to the house; it belongs to the owner of the house. I cannot afford to buy the house; you can. Have I made myself plain?"

Mr. Colquhoun, also an adept at flattery, smiled genially.

"You could not make yourseluf plain. But handsome is as handsome does."

"And treasure or no treasure, that property is cheap at twenty thousand pounds to any man who can appreciate a pure specimen of Tudor architecture. Forgive me, sir, but will you, as a man of business, scribble a few lines securing me in my commission if—if I earn it?"

Mr. Colquhoun rose, walked to a Louis XIV. writing table, scribbled a few lines as requested, and handed them to Mr. Adney.

"Und now, my young friendt, let uth see if you haf earnt your dinner und that cigar."

V.

MR. ADNEY paused to collect his wits. Being a journalist, he was not conscious of effort in doing so. Nevertheless, as an honest craftsman, he wanted to give "value received," and perhaps he did, or perhaps he didn't. Fiction, disguised as fact, has a market value, but the valuation placed upon their wares by young novelists may be over-estimated.

"You are interested in ciphers?" asked Mr. Adney.

"On cheques, yeth. An extra cipher makth all the differenth to capital und intereth."

"You have a sense of humour, sir?"

"Out of buthneth hours, yeth."

"I asked you where the Cumine money had gone. I have asked Mr. Cumine and Miss Cumine the same question. They don't know. So far as I can learn, living on the spot, and knowing the family intimately, nobody knows. I spoke of a wild guess. Supposing—supposing, I say, that some of these Cumines were misers——"

Mr. Colquhoun lent an attentive ear, nodding approvingly. His own father had been a miser; he had "cut up" astoundingly well in Hamburg. Mr. Adney continued:—

"Suppose that a miserly Cumine had a spendthrift son. The Doctrine of Compensation adjusts these matters. Is it too wild a guess to hazard the conjecture that a miser hid his hoard, fearing that a spendthrift might squander it at cards, with women, or at Newmarket?"

"*Potztausend!* I could tell you some things about my own——" He broke off; there is honour amongst Scots. Mr. Colquhoun firmly closed a too-leaky mouth by inserting between his lips a five-shilling cigar. Mr. Adney went on:—

"This miser, so I conjecture, hid his money in his house, knowing that house and property were strictly entailed."

"Yeth."

"Before I say more, will you kindly glance at this paper? The ink is faded; the paper is brittle with age; so please handle it carefully."

Mr. Colquhoun poised a pince-nez upon his nose, took the paper, and read two paragraphs:—

"*I have tried to inculcate thrift into my son, but a spendthrift is irreclaimable. This Bible I bequeath to my grandson, Thomas. Let him read the lines traced now herein; let Thomas read diligently; let my thrift turn to his advantage.*

"*If you search in Scripture, the seeker after Truth shall find Gold. I have panelled my own snug parlour in oak, for oak costs the gold which your grandsire denied your father. I swear that he shall not spend this gold.*"

Mr. Colquhoun shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Adney observed casually:—

"This paper was found by me in the very Bible bequeathed to Thomas Cumine, the great-grandfather of Mr. Cumine. The Bible was handed to the gentleman in question by the trustees of the estate upon the death of Thomas Cumine's father, the spendthrift. Apparently he could make neither head nor tail of it. The Bible is still in the panelled parlour."

Mr. Colquhoun admitted frankly that he, for his part, was bewildered. Mr. Adney laughed.

"It is a clumsy example of a cipher in common use during the eighteenth century. In the first paragraph note all the words that begin with a "T." Take them in their numerical order. Three—four—six—fifteen — nineteen — twenty-two — twenty-six — twenty-eight — thirty-two — thirty-seven — thirty-eight — thirty-nine. In the second paragraph isolate the words in the same numerical order, and we get this message: 'Search in the panelled parlour for gold your father shall not spend.'"

"*Lieber Gott!*" exclaimed Mr. Colquhoun. "Und you, my young friendt, you find thith so old paper in der Bible, *hein?*"

"I took it out of that Bible, on my word of honour."

"Und then you talk, you blab, und so we haf an article in a *verdammpt* newspaper?"

"I wrote that article myself."

"Und why?"

"I hoped it would challenge attention. It did. Out of the many persons curious enough to hunt for treasure I expected to pick the right man. I picked you. Forgive me if I have made a mistake."

Mr. Adney spoke with the ingenuousness of youth. Out of this Highland chieftain oozed suspicion; but caution, that racial quality, remained.

"You egsplain; good! Now, you egsplain more, und then, maybe, we get down to buthneth. You are parson's son; you blay hide und seek mit Mith Cumine; they are your friendts. But you do not go to your friendts und thay: 'My good peoples, I haf found money for you, lots of money. Let me take you to that money in the panelled parlour!' You do not thay that—why?"

Mr. Adney smiled reassuringly.

"I was expecting that question. Why, indeed? You put your finger, sir, upon the marrow of the matter; you touch my heart, which is not mine. I have bestowed it, such as it is, upon Miss Cumine. I am engaged to Miss Cumine; and her father refuses consent to our marriage. That, if you understand the expression, gets my goat."

Mr. Colquhoun chuckled, rubbing together a pair of soft, white, pudgy hands. It was difficult to imagine those hands wielding a claymore or a skene d'hu. They seemed to have been designed by an inscrutable Providence to sign cheques.

"Soh-h-h! Yeth—I tomble, to use your own egspressions."

"I will add one more illuminating word. Mr. Cumine might reconsider his objections to me as a son-in-law if Old Hall were sold through my initiative. Initiative is my capital."

"Good! I haf initiative, too. Yeth—I read your article. I show it to Isidore und Adalbert, my partners. We are in the money-lending buthneth, as maybe you know."

"I have read some of your confidential letters, admirably worded, if I may say so."

"Yeth; I—I write good English, although I—I talk——"

"Scotch," murmured Mr. Adney.

Mr. Colquhoun's smile slanted more than ever. He continued:—

"I persuade my partners to take a look at Old Hall. They go down in my car—they look—they laugh—they grimace—soh! Adalbert, he thay to me: 'Treasure? Rats!' Und so I cut Adalbert und Isidore out of this."

Mr. Adney looked grieved.

"You affirm, sir, that your two partners, who, together with you, must often advance large sums of money upon security not to be described as gilt-edged, can detect no signs of treasure in Old Hall?"

"No."

"They have not your nose. However——!"

"To-morrow," said Mr. Colquhoun, "I go again to Old Hall, by myseluf. You shmoke another cigar? No? Put one in your pocket, my friendt."

Shortly afterwards Mr. Adney withdrew.

## VI.

MR. COLQUHOUN kept his word, which he did religiously when it was to his interest to do so. Désirée told the tale of what passed during his second visit. She showed him the panelled parlour; and, in answer to a question, she assured him that the panelling, still in fine condition, had not been touched since it was put in. Désirée played no rehearsed part. Throughout a long morning she answered many questions honestly and charmingly. Mr. Colquhoun was particularly interested in a large Family Bible, which he discovered in the panelled parlour: and he found in it, in crabbed handwriting, which he thought he had seen before, an inscription: "To my grandson, Thomas Cumine." He learned, what was perfectly true, that the sire of Thomas had been a sad spendthrift. Canny to the last, he appraised carefully the potential value of the agricultural land and the timber upon the estate. Ultimately, when his solicitors, Messrs. Curzon and Montagu, gentlemen with remarkable noses, had passed judgment upon the ancient title deeds, Mr. Colquhoun bought the property for twenty thousand pounds.

He took possession within three months. About the same time Mr. Adney married Désirée.

## VII.

AFTER returning from an enchanting honeymoon, spent in the pleasant land of France, Mr. Adney called upon Mr. Colquhoun, carrying with him a sheet of cream-laid notepaper. In fine, he claimed the sum of one thousand pounds as commission due to him as agent in the sale of Cumine Old Hall.

Mr. Colquhoun displayed strange irritability.

"You haf a cheek——!"

"I have two cheeks, sir, but I only ask for one cheque."

"Young man, you haf bamboozled me. There is no treasure in that *verdammpt* parlour."

"There was."

"*Gott in Himmel!* You—you took it away mit you?"

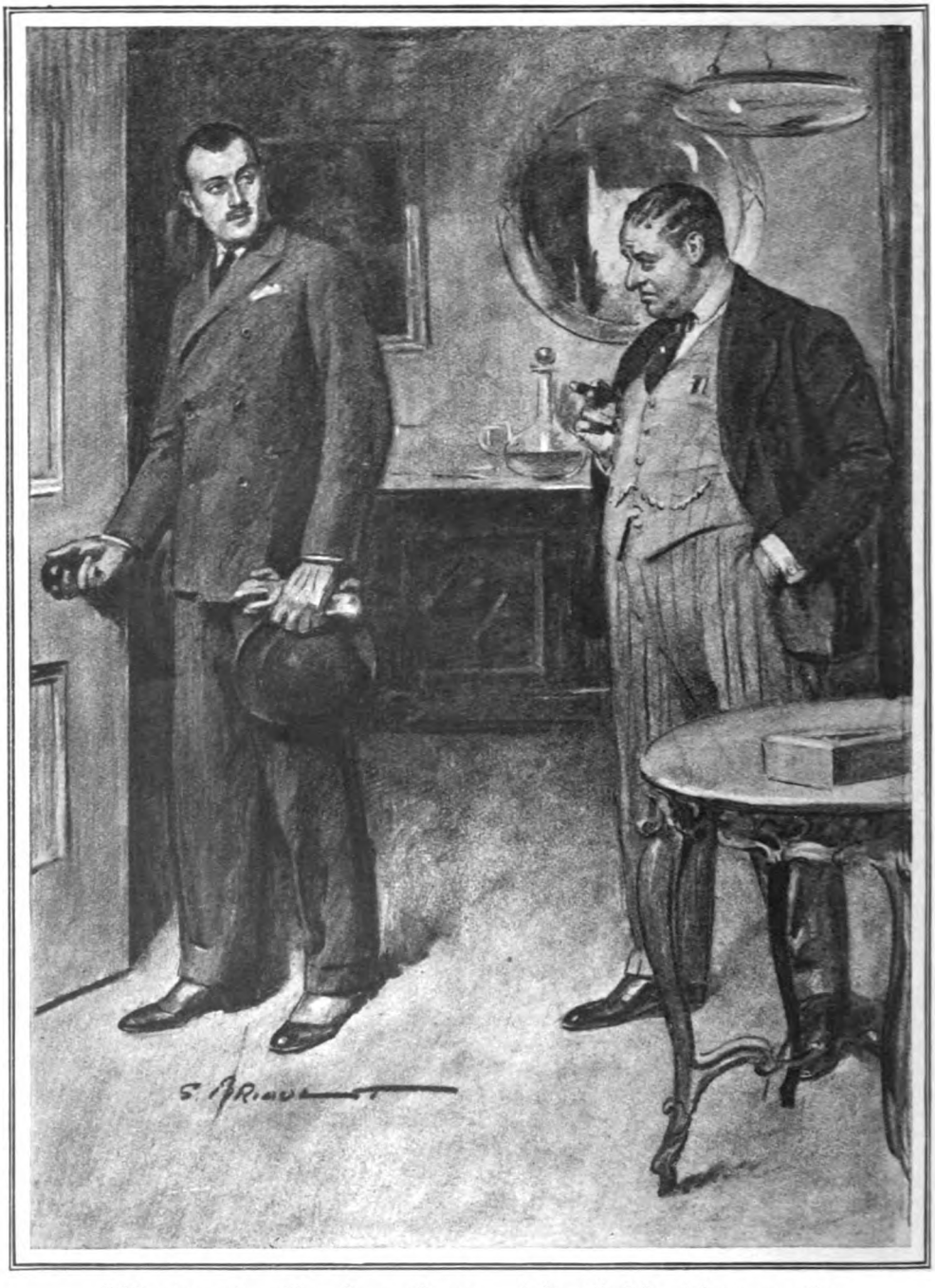
"I did."

"Schweinhund——!"

"Softly, Mr. Colquhoun, softly. The panelled parlour was Miss Cumine's own room. Miss Cumine is now Mrs. Adney. You can take my word for it that she *is* a treasure; her price is above rubies. My interpretation of the word 'treasure' happens not to be the same as yours."

"You said---gold, yeth, gold."

"That describes adequately Mrs. Adney's hair. I am a truthful and honourable man, sir. In my dealings with you I have not strayed from the strait and narrow way. The grandfather of Thomas Cumine was a miser; his son, the spendthrift, squandered his father's money. I found that cipher in the old Bible because I placed it there



"My story, sir, will make good copy. Adieu!" Mr. Adney moved to the door.

myself. I exercised, it is true, certain poor powers of imagination which served my purpose, the sale of a property worth every penny you paid for it. You exercised your powers of imagination in like manner. I was perfectly frank with you. I told you

that I had written the article which challenged your attention; I told you that I was engaged to Miss Cumine. This scrap of paper sets forth that you will pay me, on demand, five per cent. of the purchase price of Old Hall, provided you find in the panelled parlour treasure. Next day you went down to Old Hall; you spent an hour at least in the panelled parlour with the treasure. If you failed to recognize pure gold when you saw it, I can only suggest that your eyes are not so sharp as your nose. Please write out a cheque to bearer."

"No."

"Right. I am still on the staff of *The Daily Banner* and I am now one of the sub-editors. The curiosity of the great British Public was provoked by my article and by the publication of certain letters, but my Chief complained that it was not satisfied. It shall be satisfied. I wish you good day, Mr. Colquhoun."

Mr. Colquhoun's eyes bulged out of his head.

"You forged der cipher——"

"Forged is a libellous word, sir. It amused me to try my prentice hand at a cipher. I was very careful not to tell you that it was genuine. I am wasting your valuable time——"

"Wait! What you mean to do, *hein?*"

"To tell the true story to our million readers. As corroborative detail we shall print, I make no doubt, a facsimile of this paper which you repudiate. If you happen to possess a non-copyright photograph of yourself you might let us have it. At the moment the public is interested in you philanthropists who are such a tower of strength to poor and not too intelligent persons. My story, sir, will make good copy. Adieu!"

Mr. Adney moved to the door.

"Haf a cigar, Mithter Adenoid?"

"Adney, sir, Adney. Do I address you as Cohen? No. I accept a cigar, particularly if it is as good as the last, provided I have your assurance that it is merely your customary preliminary to doing business."

Mr. Colquhoun muttered something in his native Doric that could not be printed. Then he handed Mr. Adney a cigar, and his voice became calm, dangerously so.

"I haf never sought—publicity."

"I am sure that statement is true. Like the humble Allen, you, sir, do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

"See now—I gif you a hundert pounds; und we cry qvits."

"Offer refused without thanks."

Mr. Colquhoun's nose kissed his chin. He could hear the raucous laughter and splutterings of rage of Mr. Isidore Gordon and Mr. Adalbert Lenox. To build up a great philanthropic business, to see it grotesquely shattered by laughter, to attempt to reconstruct from such ruins another business, under other names, and far from Montrose House—these possibilities distressed Mr. Colquhoun. He wiped his ample brow with a gorgeous handkerchief.

"This ith a hold-up, yeth. See now, a last word mit you: I gif you two hundert pounds."

"You mean a penultimate word. Do you ask me to value Mrs. Adney at two hundred pounds?"

"Three hundert——?"

"One thousand—or nothing. Fierce is the light that beats upon your throne, sir."

A vanquished Scot strode to his desk. He held out his cheque; Mr. Adney exchanged it for the sheet of note-paper. Mr. Colquhoun tore up the sheet of note-paper viciously. Mr. Adney tore up the cheque.

"*Potztausend!*"

"My dear sir, we are quits. You gave me a wonderful dinner, and, incidentally, you have helped to give me a wife. Let us shake hands and part friends."

They did so. Mr. Colquhoun was visibly affected.

ABOUT ten days later Désirée received, by parcels post, a large cardboard box that contained a lovely seal-skin coat and a card. She read the card.

"With Mr. Colquhoun's best wishes and compliments."

"Bobbie——?"

"Désirée——?"

"What does this mean?"

"In two words, darling—Treasure Trove."

# "SMOKE"

By

# LYNN DOYLE

*ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WATTS*

I WAS leanin' back in the railway carriage, said Mr. Patrick Murphy, suckin' at the ould pipe an' wonderin' what price I was goin' to get for my potatoes, when the wee gimlet-eyed man on the seat fornent me leaned forward an' put his hand on my knee.

"Do you know," sez he—an' he had a big deep voice about four times the size of himself—"do you know that you're suckin' in Death? Do you know there's enough poison in a pipe of tobacco to kill a field mouse, or fifteen crickets, or forty-seven bluebottle flies?"

"Oh, well," sez I, "if ever I see a field mouse smokin' a pipe I'll tell him to give it to the cat."

"Over an' above the risk of death," sez the wee man, "the smoker runs other an' terrible dangers. Sooner or later his sight an' hearin' are affected. His teeth are rendered foul an' unsightly"—I thought of the one ould yellow fang I have in front, an' shut my mouth here—"an' his digestion weakens till he becomes a burden to himself an' his family."

Just then the train drew up at a station. The door was pulled open, an' a stout tub of a red-faced fellow lepped in, an' him with a bag of samples in his hand, an' a cigar stuck in his mouth. He took a couple of pulls at the cigar, seen it was out, an' then pulls a box of matches from his pocket an' strikes one. Then he minded his manners, an' looked round the carriage with the lighted match still in his hand.

"I suppose there's nobody here objects to smokin'?" sez he.

Not a word was said; but there was a kind of a snirt of a laugh went round the carriage, an' everybody looked at the wee gimlet-eyed man.

He was gazin' at the commercial traveller in a kind of a mournful way.

"Do you know, my friend," sez he, "that of all the ways of poisonin' yourself with nicotine, cigars are the second worst? Do you know that there's as much nicotine in one cigar as in two pipes, an' that one pipeful of tobacco——"

The commercial traveller waited till the wee man was done and then blew a cloud of smoke at him that near give him the jaundice.

"I'm no canary," sez he, "nor field mouse either, an' as for crickets, I doubt, by the look of you, you have them all ate. You an' your canaries, an' your bluebottle flies. You'll be a meal for bluebottle flies before I will, ye little——"

An' away went the commercial traveller like a river in spate. The wee man tried to break in on him once or twice, but he couldn't get a word in edgeways.

"Good-bye now," sez the traveller as the train slowed up. "Keep company with men instead of mice, an' you'll maybe be a man yet yourself. Tell me," sez he, "did you ever smoke in your life? No? Then give it a chance. Here's a cigar for you. Wait; that would be too strong for all the stomach you have left by this time. Take a cigarette"—he pulled out a case—"one of them gold-tipped ones; it'll make your mouth look swankier. Now take it," sez he, "an' smoke it too. There's not enough nicotine in a cigarette to kill you; an' even if there is it'll be a small loss."

The wee man looked at the cigarette in his hand a long time, an' then at the open window. I thought he was goin' to pitch the cigarette out, but I suppose he thought somebody's canary might find it an' smoke himself to death, for after hesitatin' a minit he ended by puttin' it in his waistcoat pocket. I could see the gold tip stickin' up, an' couldn't help sniggerin' to myself; for, thinks I, this'll be a bad give-away when he starts the lecturin' again.

I hadn't long to wait. Before the train started, in gets a sailor, a Navy man, an' a hearty-lookin' buck, too. He shoved his long pillow-case of a bag up on the rack, sat down, put his hand into his overcoat pocket, an' then let a most lamentable oath out of him.

"I've lost my fags," sez he.

He looked round the carriage, sizin' us all up, an' waitin', I could see, for someone to make him an offer of one. But we were all waitin' to hear what the wee gimlet-eyed man had to say; an' nobody spoke.

"Oh, well," sez the sailor, good-humoured still, "sure I can do without."

The wee man leaned over an' seized him by the hand.

"Do you know, my friend," sez he, "that you have just gained a greater victory than

**"I've lost my fags," sez the sailor. He looked round the carriage, waitin' for someone to make him an offer of one.**

you ever did in the Great War, an' over a more deadly enemy than the Germans? Cigarette!" sez he, "the worst form of smoking by far. Let me read you some figures——"

The sailor took it like a lamb; but all the time I could see him eyein' the wee man as if he was somethin' out of a menagerie. All at once he points a finger at him.

"Why, you're a nice joker," sez he, "preachin' to me about smokin'—with a fag stickin' out of your own pocket."

He made a grab an' shoved the cigarette in his mouth.

The wee man was in a terrible state.

"Don't smoke it," he cried out. "You've gone without smoking for ten minutes; you can do without it for an hour, for a week, for a lifetime. I warn you," sez he, very solemn, as the sailor lit a match, "if you smoke that cigarette you'll be sorry all your days."

The sailor leaned back an' blew a big mouthful of smoke up in the air.

"Look at me bein' sorry, mister," sez he. An' then the cigarette blew up.

When the smoke cleared the sailor-man's face was like the flue of a range; his eyebrows were gone an' the front of his hair; an' we had to beat the sparks out of the handkerchief round his neck. It was five minutes before he got his eyes open; an' when he did he just launched himself at the wee man like a torpedo. We pulled him off, an' the whole carriage-full of people held him down; but how his language missed settin' fire to him again I can't tell you. At the next station we dragged him out. The station-master locked him in the lamp-room an' sent for the police an' the doctor. When I got back to my own compartment the colour had come into the wee gimlet-eyed man's face again. He laid hold of me at once, an' pulled me over into a corner.

"My friend," sez he, very confidential—his eyes was all shinin', he was that eager—"do you think you could tell me what kind of tobacco was in that cigarette?"

# ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 155.

*(The Third of the Series.)*

THUS on the light fantastic toe
Do rustic lads and lasses go.

1. Saintly, a swimmer of the seas.
2. A hash or medley, if you please.
3. Seizing on what is not your own.
4. Suggesting tools in age of stone.
5. Go hither for Society.
6. Belonging to a river bank.
7. In '28 will victor be
   If in the first and fleetest rank.

KING COLE.

*Answers to Acrostic No.* 155 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on June* 10*th.*

*To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 154.

ALL the year round, bird number one we view;
When comes the summer, comes bird number two.

1. Urgency, pressure, violence, or strain.
   Cut off its head, the hair will still remain.
2. A resting-place for many a weary head,
   The proper place to look for it is bed.
3. Four little words of equal length unite,
   In the result a solemn curse we write.
4. It may be parchment, listen to the drum.
   Upon the breakfast-table it may come.
5. A scamp who, if the word were rearranged,
   Into an Eastern sailor would be changed.
6. Great was the Emperor who bore this name.
   Reverse the word, and still it is the same.
7. A town in Scotland join to bovine sound,
   A county then in Ireland will be found.

PAX.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. S | tres | S |
| 2. P | illo | W |
| 3. A | nathem | A |
| 4. R | ol | L |
| 5. R | asca | L |
| 6. O | tt | O |
| 7. W | icklo | W |

NOTES.—Light 5. Lascar. 6. Otto the Great.

THIRTY-FIRST SERIES: RESULT.

EVERY acrostic was correctly answered by Aon, Darnlinvarach, Deen, Enos, Initio, Iver, Mancu, Manora, Peci, Pete, Silex, Sivart, Slugo, Splosh, Ubique, Wahed, Whal, Yoko, Zenas, and Zyme. Of these twenty solvers, one, Mancu, is now ineligible for a prize; the others will share the twelve guineas, each one receiving thirteen shillings and fourpence.

Aon is Mr. J. E. W. Taylor, 20, Davies Lane, Leytonstone, E.11; Darnlinvarach is Major Drummond, Falcon Lodge, Putney, S.W.15; Deen is Mr. J. Mulhall, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland; Enos is Mr. W. S. Cool, 10, Whitehall Place, S.W.1; Initio is Mr. C. W. Roberts, 18, Highwood Avenue, North Finchley, London, N.10; Iver is Mr. A. Birch, 164, Broom Road, Teddington; Manora is Mr. G. W. Sealy, 19, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.10; Peci is Mr. G. E. Matthews, 53, Stockwell Green, S.W.9; Pete is Mr. H. F. Samman, 37, James Street, Cambridge; Silex is Mr. J. L. Wolferstan, 5, Princess Square, Plymouth; Sivart is Mr. C. Clay, 11, Tite Street, Chelsea, S.W.3; Slugo is Mr. J. J. Holloway, Lyndale, Howard Road, New Malden, Surrey; Splosh is Mr. L. Dale, Christ's Hospital, Sussex; Ubique is Major Luard, 14, Woodlane, Falmouth; Wahed is Mr. W. N. Armstrong, 40, Langdon Park Road, N.6; Whal is Mr. N. Mulhall, 3, Albert Road, Whalley Range, Manchester; Yoko is Mr. F. Rawson, 19D, Pembridge Square, W.2; Zenas is Mr. F. S. Pilleau, 8, Meadow Way Green, Letchworth, Herts; Zyme is Mr. J. W. Pulsford, 107A, Brixton Hill, S.W.2.

# T. T. TEA, Ltd.

By

## AUGUSTUS MUIR

*ILLUSTRATED BY L. G. ILLINGWORTH*

I.

"AND now," said Mr. Hutton, lifting his cup and critically sipping his black unsweetened coffee, "let's come down to brass tacks. What was it you wanted to say to me, MacLaren?"

Nervously, young John MacLaren hitched up his trousers at the knee. "I'll cut it short, sir," he began, clearing his throat.

"Thank you," said Mr. Hutton, with the flicker of a smile on his hard, keen face. "I'll say this much for you, MacLaren—you generally do!"

MacLaren nodded. "One of your own axioms, sir. *Don't waste words in business.* I wanted to see you about—well, about myself. I've been connected with your firm now for ten years, barring when I was in France. And I think by this time I know the tea business from A to Z. I'd be a fool if I didn't, sir."

"You know a goodish deal, MacLaren," conceded Mr. Hutton.

"Yes, sir. Well——"

"But not so much as you think," added Mr. Hutton, looking intently into his coffee cup.

"At any rate, sir, I could run a wholesale tea business on my own," maintained MacLaren doggedly.

"On your own?" Mr. Hutton's bristling grey eyebrows went up. "Isn't your job in the London and Eastern Tea Syndicate good enough for you? It's good enough for *me!*" There was a caustic edge to his voice.

"Yes, sir, but you're managing director. There's all the——"

"And why shouldn't you, one day? I can't live for ever, you know, MacLaren."

"It seems to me," said John MacLaren, slowly, "that there's precious little chance of my ever getting a really good job in the London and Eastern, far less aspiring to that, sir."

"What do you mean?" snapped Mr. Hutton.

"Well, there are so many people ahead of me in the firm. I don't seem to be making the big strides I want. Some of these people are quite old men, who've been jogging along for years."

"They're the bulwarks of the business, MacLaren! Their experience in the tea trade is invaluable to me and to the firm."

Copyright, 1926, by Augustus Muir.

"Quite right, sir," assented MacLaren, "I'm not suggesting that they aren't. But I feel I'm not getting on—not even making the money I'm actually worth. I've always put my last ounce into my job, to make myself indispensable. I'm patted on the back for it, and told I'm a good boy, and all that sort of thing, but that's not enough."

"And what is it you do want?"

MacLaren laughed a trifle sheepishly. "You'll be saying it's the old story, sir. I want more money. I'm only getting four hundred a year. I consider I'm worth a thousand at least to the firm. But I'm always being told to wait. Wait! At the present rate, I'll be fifty before my 'twenty per' comes along!"

Mr. Hutton leant back in his chair and looked steadily at MacLaren. "You told me you had something particular to say to me, and I take you out to the Savoy for lunch. And after you've eaten my lunch, you spin me the old, old tale that you want an increase of salary. Is that all you had to say, MacLaren?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, I thought not. You mean there's a girl in the case? You've made me take you out to lunch, MacLaren, to tell me you want to marry my daughter Evelyn?"

MacLaren flushed. "No such thing, sir. I didn't mean to ask you any such——"

"But you mean to do it all the same? I may be old, but I'm not a fogey. I've got eyes in my head, MacLaren."

John MacLaren nodded. "As a matter of fact, you're quite right, sir. Evelyn and I are—er—— You're quite right. I know it has been frightful cheek of me ever thinking about her at all. Of course, Mrs. Hutton has been a brick—just like a mother to me, and took pity on me, and asked me to your house because I'm a solitary sort of bird—one of these lonely Scotsmen in London. It seems a queer way to repay your hospitality, sir—to go and fall in love with your daughter."

"Cut that out," said Mr. Hutton, shortly. "I expect it was Evelyn who fell in love with you. You can marry Evelyn if you like. I won't stop you—not if you make good. But if you don't make good, I'll put my foot down like a ton of bricks. I hope that's plain, MacLaren."

"Quite, sir."

"I like you," proceeded Mr. Hutton. "But business is business. You're doing nicely—you're a coming man—but I'm not going to give you a rise of salary just because you want to marry my daughter. Don't imagine it for a moment."

"I don't, sir," said John MacLaren. "In fact, I didn't mean to mention Evelyn at all to you just now. There's plenty of time for that. It was you who opened the subject. I wanted to put a proposition to you, sir."

Mr. Hutton lit a cigarette. "Well?"

MACLAREN hitched up his trousers again.

"I'm afraid it sounds rather like a sort of threat, sir, but I want you to look at it in the proper spirit. Briefly, it's this. If the London and Eastern Tea Syndicate can't see its way to give me a decent large increase, I mean to clear out."

Mr. Hutton smiled grimly.

"Which of our rivals have you been flirting with, MacLaren?"

"None, sir. It wouldn't be worth it. I know quite well that the London and Eastern is practically the most important tea syndicate in the trade. Going over to a rival isn't my idea at all. I mean to set up in business for myself."

Mr. Hutton laughed. "You?"

"Yes, sir," said MacLaren, stolidly. "I may as well let you know what's in my mind. The London and Eastern are wholesalers. You import tea; you dole it out to the retailers. You make your profit; the retailer makes his. I intend to make both profits. I am going to import the tea and sell it straight from the planter into the housewife's tea-caddy in one operation."

Mr. Hutton laughed again, this time longer than before.

"My dear MacLaren! What a dream! Do you realize—have you the foggiest idea of the difficulties you are up against?"

"Such as, sir?"

"Supplies. Heavens, the London and Eastern—to say nothing of three or four other smaller syndicates—could cut off your supplies with a snap of their fingers. Your puny attempt to disorganize the entire tea trade could never get farther than paper. You simply couldn't get enough tea to keep going a month."

"I think you're wrong, sir," said John MacLaren, quietly. "When I was in India for your firm three months ago, I met an old friend—an old Army pal. He once imagined I did him a favour—it was in the trenches, the usual sort of thing. He swore at the time if ever he could do me a favour in return he'd do it. Well, when I met him again three months ago, in Calcutta, he told me that his uncle has retired and left him a big tea garden. Harry runs it himself. I asked him, as a matter of fact, to open an account with us—with the London and Eastern."

"Well?"

"Well, he refused. Their trade is entirely with other countries. His uncle was once badly stung over some English wholesale firm, and

s far as they're concerned they cut their
pplies to England right out. He said he'd
o business with me personally, but not
ith the L. and E. Not at any price. You
ay I couldn't get supplies, sir? I've only
ot to cable Harry, and I've got enough
pplies f.o.b. at London docks within six
eeks to last me a twelvemonth."

"H'm!" Mr. Hutton signalled to the
aiter across the hotel lounge for more
offee. "It's possible, MacLaren, it's
ossible. I'm not denying that you can
olve one or two of the difficulties. My
oint is that you can't solve the lot. Take
istribution. How in Heaven's name do
ou expect to get that tea of yours into
—what did you say?—into the housewife's
ea-caddy?"

"Parcel post, sir. That, and rail. There's
mple margin of profit to allow it. Ample.
nd I'll still be underselling you by fourpence
pound. And better tea. Goes farther.
asts longer. And better flavour. I know
hat I'm talking about, sir. After ten
ears——"

"Oh, for the love of Mike, keep off
hat, MacLaren! I've been forty-two years
n the tea trade, but I don't keep harping
n it. What did you say? Lasts longer,
etter flavour? What of it? That's precious
ittle good to you, unless every housewife in
he kingdom knows it."

"They will. The first advertisement campaign will run to a good few thousand pounds. Even if only one housewife in every hundred asks for a sample of our T.T. Tea we're on clover. T.T., sir? Tasty, Thrifty! T.T. Tea, Ltd.—that's what I'd call it. I estimate that within a couple of months I'll have convinced a sufficient number of housewives that my T.T. Tea is best and cheapest, to give us a rattling fine profit. My mail order department will be beside the Kent wharf, where the boats will unload. I'll take on fifteen girls as packers to start with, expanding as the business grows. I've got the capital—Harry will see to that. He's as keen as mustard on my going ahead. But I'm not going ahead, sir, if you—that is, the London and Eastern—will weigh in with a decent salary. I've got no desire to leave, but I will if I'm compelled to."

Mr. Hutton chuckled quietly.

"MacLaren," he said, "I like you. But I'm not going to disorganize my office to make a job for you at a thousand a year till I think you're worth it, and a bit more. The L. and E. has taught you all you know. If you can't wait till we can fit you out with a good job, then you can go. I'll release you at once if you really want to go ahead with that wild-cat scheme of yours."

MacLaren started. "You—you mean, sir, that you can't give me the increase?"

"I won't. I think you owe the L. and E. a little service for what you've learned with us. If you stay, you'll have a good job one day. If you want to go, go now, and be done with it. If you succeed—I'll congratulate you. But I don't think you will. My remarks about Evelyn, by the way, still hold. If you succeed—good. But I've no use for a frost in my family."

MacLaren nodded slowly. "I see all that, sir. Quite plain. Do you mind telling me what the attitude of the L. and E. will be to my venture?"

"Certainly. I regard it as a rash project. Its aim is to disorganize the entire tea trade, and make a profit by doing so. It is the duty of the L. and E. and every other tea syndicate to smash the new venture by every means in their power. Every means in their power, MacLaren. You may be quite sure we won't hesitate when the time comes."

John MacLaren smiled wryly.

"I know I'm up against it, sir. But I'm going through with it all the same. I believe in the idea."

"That's final?"

"Final."

"Very well, come back to the office, MacLaren, and I'll fix up your resignation."

"You think I'm—I'm a fool, sir?"

"Worse than a fool," said Mr. Hutton gravely, as they rose. "Worse than a fool."

## II.

JOHN MACLAREN thought so himself as the days and weeks passed. He often pondered Mr. Hutton's words, "Have you got the foggiest idea of the difficulties you are up against?" There were a thousand small details to attend to; and every detail took time. First of all MacLaren rented a furnished room, with a telephone, as a temporary office; and he formed the private company, T.T. Tea, Ltd. A personal friend who was a solicitor undertook to advise him on the purely legal side of the affair. MacLaren, too, was fortunate in his choice of a lieutenant. Alexander Craig was reared on the same native heath; twenty-five years old, eager, ambitious, he seized at MacLaren's offer and came to London. Craig knew nothing about tea, but he had a shrewd eye, and the tireless industry of a pit-pony. Within five weeks MacLaren and Craig were sitting in the little office that was above a warehouse on the Thames bank, interviewing handy-looking girls who would be the nucleus of their dispatching staff. Their first cargo was due in ten days' time.

"Do ye think we'll gang bust, Jock?" asked Craig. When alone they fell naturally into their native Doric.

"I shouldna wonder, Sandy," growled MacLaren.

"If we do, mebbe your friend Harry will gie us a job whacking niggers on his tea-plantin'."

"If we gang bust wi' Harry's money, it's *us* that he'll come and whack. All round this warehouse, then kick us both head-first into a mud-bank."

"There'll be nae need," said Craig, with a confident wink.

It was Craig who produced Janet. Janet was an elderly cousin, who had run for years the branch of a little London *café*. As this was changing hands she was glad to come along to manage MacLaren's staff of girls in the warehouse. Janet quickly learned all there was to know about packing tea, and for a week before the first cargo arrived she had the girls packing hard at dummies till she was satisfied with their proficiency.

Craig was useful, too, on the publicity side of the business. MacLaren had his own ideas on how tea should be advertised, but it was Craig who dug out an artist for their drawings, and who made daily pilgrimages to Fleet Street to haggle with advertisement representatives about "space." Their first campaign was to be a national one. But though it was large, they could not afford wastage. Every penny spent must count.

THE thrilling morning dawned, with their prominent announcements in the big London and Provincial dailies. Long before the paper boy had delivered MacLaren's newspaper at his lodgings, Craig was along with a little bundle containing their precious "spaces" that would be scanned with interest or contempt by the housewives of Britain. While he ate a hasty breakfast, with Craig pacing the floor impatient to be off to the warehouse, the one thought in MacLaren's mind was, "What'll he say to that? Aye, and what'll he try to do?" He pictured Mr. Hutton, in a room very different from his own, glancing at the morning newspapers. He could imagine his late chief starting with surprise at their advertisements, and then assuming an air of bored indifference, in case his thoughts should be read by Evelyn across the table. MacLaren had received no further invitations to the house of the managing director of the London and Eastern Tea Syndicate; but Evelyn lunched with him twice a week, arriving bright-eyed and breathless, not from hurrying but from her eagerness to know how T.T. Tea, Ltd., progressed.

But whatever his late chief's thoughts may have been in the morning, MacLaren knew that Mr. Hutton would have given something to see the contents of the bag of letters which Craig, too impatient to wait till next day, had collected from the local post-office that night before it closed. They emptied the bag on the office floor, and executed a fandango round the contents. Coupons, coupons, coupons, clipped from their advertisements. They were the first of the London responses; the later ones and the Provincial replies would come trickling (or flooding) in during the week-end.

These were heady days. The replies came not in a trickle, but a flood indeed. A post-free sample of tea, enough to serve a dozen people, was not to be sneezed at. The packers were busy. The scratch of the addressers' pens was music in MacLaren's ears. And then the orders. Slow, very slow at first. Some took three, four, five days to make up their mind that the sample was good, before posting an order. A few enthusiasts—whom MacLaren and Craig blessed—ordered a fourteen-pound box to be put on the rail at once. And a week later came MacLaren's next explosion in the press; a fortnight later, his third. Then they settled down to find where they stood. It was here Craig's accountancy training was invaluable. One Friday, at half an hour past midnight, he announced across the office table that they had made a profit.

John MacLaren got solemnly to his feet.

"I kent it could be done, Sandy," he said quietly, with a ring of triumph in his voice. Then he snapped his fingers. "Send off this cable to Harry. '*First month's balance shows profit. John.*'" Then he sat down again. "What's the profit, Sandy? A thousand?"

"The profit," said Craig, referring to his figures, "is seven pounds nine and threepence."

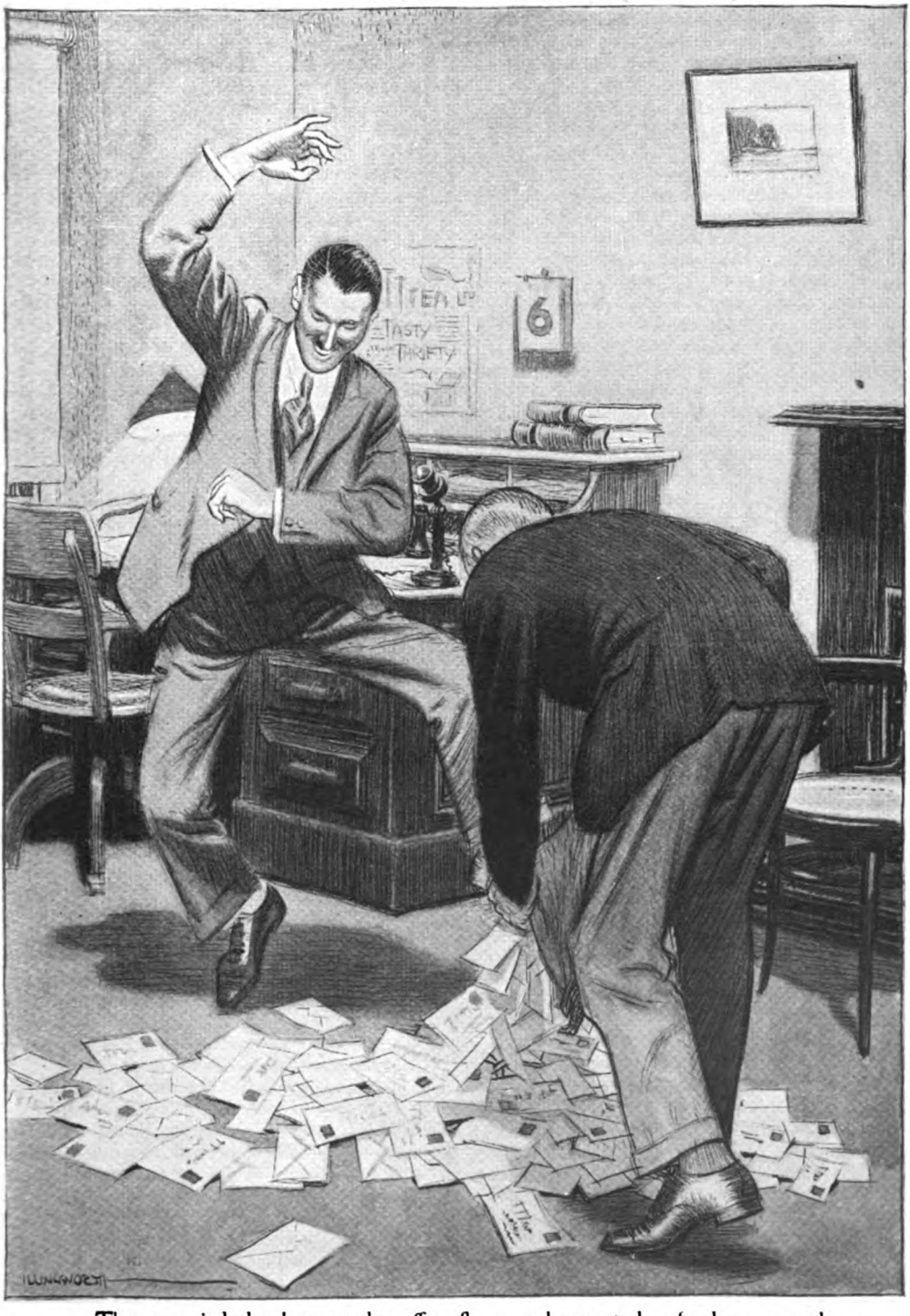
MacLaren blinked.

"And three-quarters of our capital is gone," added Craig.

"Cancel the cable," said MacLaren. "And now, if ye please, we'll stop and think. We'll think hard. We've to come to the biggest decision we've made yet, Sandy. It'll make us, or it'll break us. The question is this: What are we to do next?"

They left the office at three a.m., the decision taken. They ratified it next morning.

"It's sink or swim, ma lad!" cried MacLaren. "We've agreed that every ha'penny we've left in the bank goes into advertisement. And this time our cry is to be 'Success'! It's the one sure note. We'll tell every housewife in the country that T.T. Tea has made a profit and has come to stay. Women are like sheep; aye, success breeds success. If next week's campaign doesna bring in applications to twice the




They emptied the bag on the office floor, and executed a fandango round the contents.

number we've had before—aye, and cash orders frae half the folk who've had a sample and no' replied—ma name's no' Jock MacLaren."

"Ye're richt, Jock," said Craig, confidently. "Ye're richt."

HE was.

Within five months T.T., Ltd., had made a profit of just over two thousand pounds.

"And now," said MacLaren when Craig announced the figures, "what'll he say to that?"

"He's been waiting to see us go smash," chuckled Craig. "And he's been disappointed."

"He has that. I hope he likes the feeling. We can't have done the big syndicates any harm yet—at least, nothing to speak of—but we will, Sandy, we will! Two thousand profit—och, man, it's nothing to what we'll do!"

"Dinna speak so quick," returned Craig. "Yon man Hutton may have something up his sleeve that'll give us such a dunt that we'll never get over it."

"Aye," muttered MacLaren, and he sat down twiddling a pencil. "There's a big dunt coming soon. I'm thinking he's just waiting his chance."

III.

MR. HUTTON'S chance was not long in presenting itself.

The managing director of the London and Eastern Tea Syndicate was engaged in clearing his afternoon mail, when a secretary brought in a card.

"Mr. R. Van Reuth to see you, sir, and if you're busy he can come back again. He says it's important."

"I'm always busy," grunted Mr. Hutton, "but show him in."

Mr. Van Reuth was a little dark man with very bright brown eyes. From his name, Mr. Hutton had suspected that he might be American, but when he started to state his business, it was clear from his enunciation that he was of Dutch parentage.

"I have lived for long in India," Mr. Van Reuth said. "I have had various tea interests at different times, but I have not come to sell any tea to you, sir, or to buy any tea from you. I come to you with a complaint. For years I have wanted something, and now I find I must not have it."

"You think I can help you to—to——" Mr. Hutton smiled and shrugged his shoulders. People who did not state the nature of their business at the outset always irritated him.

"Partly," said Mr. Van Reuth. "But the idea I wanted to carry out has already been done—it has been done by a man I met on the boat going out to India nine months ago. We talked it over. We both thought it good. That man on the boat did not mean to carry it out. At that time he was simply interested in the idea. But I meant to do it!" Mr. Van Reuth leaned forward, his little dark eyes glowing, and he tapped the edge of Mr. Hutton's desk. "I meant to do it! But now that other man has done it before me! Who is he? He was one of your own *employés* when I knew him. He is John MacLaren, of T.T. Tea, Ltd."

Mr. Van Reuth's face was working and his podgy fists were clenched.

"You don't seem to regard him in too friendly a light," remarked Mr. Hutton.

"Friendly!" Mr. Van Reuth laughed bitterly. "I would smash that company to-morrow if I could. As for the man MacLaren, I tell you I have a large score to settle there. Shortly he will be making the fortune that would have been mine if I had not been held up in the East since last year. I come to England to find my whole scheme in operation!"

"You mean he stole your ideas?" queried Mr. Hutton, eagerly.

"No, no. They were his ideas as much as mine. We had both thought about it. But he has got there first, Mr. Hutton!" The little man sat bolt upright on his chair. "What will it be worth to you to see the T.T. Tea Company smashed?"

Mr. Hutton pursed his lips.

"In what way do you suggest——"

"By beating them at their own game!" cried Mr. Van Reuth. "By underselling them! You, as a syndicate, cannot do it. You cannot undersell them—you cannot lower the price of tea throughout the country—it would smash you. But we could form a little company like theirs. If we had the benefit of your supplies, bought cheap in large quantities, our little company could undersell them. They would be on the rocks in a year!" Mr. Van Reuth's clenched fist tapped out his points.

Mr. Hutton shook his head.

"Just a moment," he said, slowly, his brow furrowed in thought. "You mean that the London and Eastern should finance a company to beat the T.T. people at their own game?"

"Exactly! I have a certain capital. But I need twice as much again to go into opposition to them. I have come to you because you are the people most likely to wish T.T. Tea, Ltd., out of business."

Mr. Hutton jumped from his chair and started to pace the room. At length he came to a stop on the hearthrug.

"Look here, Mr. Van Reuth," he said.

" I have a proposition to put to you. I think you agree with me on principle that this direct-to-consumer selling is bad for the tea trade generally ? It hurts the big wholesaler like ourselves, and it hurts the little man who must make his living by selling over the counter. If you will come in with me, I will see that you are amply rewarded for helping to clear the market of such trade pests as these T.T. people. If we don't do it soon, other people will be starting up. The direct-to-consumer trade will grow ! "

" True," admitted Mr. Van Reuth.

" Well, it mustn't ! We must prove to the country that this direct-to-consumer business can't be done in the tea trade ! We will make the T.T. Company totter, and in the end they will be glad to sell out to us."

"And we will then run both in conjunction ! " cried Mr. Van Reuth, his eyes sparkling.

" We will do no such thing," said Mr. Hutton, dispassionately. " You misunderstand me. I wish to prove that the direct-to-consumer business is a failure. When I say that T.T., Ltd., will be glad to sell out, I mean—sell out to the London and Eastern. So will our new company that smashed them. To continue both companies on a paying basis would be to hurt the tea trade still more."

" But—but," cried Mr. Van Reuth, " I will have taken all that trouble simply to help the syndicates ! Where does my reward come in ? "

" Here is my proposition," said Mr. Hutton, calmly. " I suggest that we form our little company at once. I suggest the name ' Tea Supplies, Ltd.' It's simple and to the point. The London and Eastern's shares in that will be fifty-one per cent., but these shares will be held by some nominee of ours, because if it became known that we were participating in such a scheme it would do us grave damage among retailers. Yes, even though our aim is to help them in the end. The other forty-nine per cent. of the shares you will hold. What is your capital ? "

" Eight thousand pounds," said Mr. Van Reuth.

" That will go towards part of your holding ; the remainder of your forty-nine per cent. will be allotted to you gratis as promoter's shares. You can't expect anything fairer than that, can you ? "

" No; certainly it is generous," admitted Mr. Van Reuth.

Mr. Hutton nodded and proceeded :—

" The Tea Supplies Company will have the benefit of the L. and E. cheap buying. That will be arranged privately. We will sell so cheaply that T.T., Ltd., will have to give up. And here is where you come in, Mr. Van Reuth. You are putting in eight thousand pounds. I promise that the London and Eastern will in the end buy over your Tea Supplies Company at a very substantial figure. I guarantee you thirty thousand pounds as your share in the end. Does that suit you ? "

" Very well," exclaimed Mr. Van Reuth. " Again I say you are generous."

" Not at all," demurred Mr. Hutton. " It's worth a lot more than that to us, as the largest syndicate in the trade, to wipe such pests as the T.T. people off the market. After the T.T. fiasco and the selling up of your Tea Supplies Company, I think that no other fools will try such a venture for many years to come."

Mr. Van Reuth nodded.

" And now," said Mr. Hutton, " the sooner we get this drawn up the better. Are you prepared to go ahead at once ? "

" At once."

" Good."

And Mr. Hutton touched a bell.

## IV.

WHEN Mr. Hutton touched his bell he put into operation an enterprise that was a commercial steam-roller.

In due course the Tea Supplies Company burst upon Britain in its full radiance. Britain blinked for a moment and then went on with its work. But a very large number of housewives observed that they could now get tea a great deal cheaper than the stuff they bought at their grocer's, and cheaper—as was put very clearly in the advertisements—than tea bought from any other direct-to-consumer firm, which meant the T.T. Tea people.

T.T. Tea, Ltd., had advertised widely. But it was nothing to the flare-up made in newspaper, on hoarding, and in leaflet by the new Tea Supplies Company. What T.T. Tea, Ltd., had done for the housewife, the Tea Supplies Company was doing a great deal better : they did not say so, but the implication was clear.

Daily Mr. Hutton and his colleague Gregorson, vice-chairman of the London and Eastern, went through the figures provided daily by Van Reuth.

" There's no doubt about it, Gregorson," said Mr. Hutton. " That young beggar MacLaren was right. There *is* money in this direct supply business ! "

Gregorson chewed his moustache.

" There is, by gad ! This Tea Supplies Company is losing money only because they're supplying tea at that cut-rate figure. Sell it at three-halfpence a pound more and it would show a profit in a deuced short time ! "

"It would," nodded Mr. Hutton. "Carry the idea a bit further and the whole tea trade would begin to look blue. Yes, the sooner we can bring young MacLaren and his T.T. Tea, Ltd., to their knees the better for all of us."

Gregorson scowled.

"And how long do you give young MacLaren before he climbs down and admits he's beaten?"

"Two months," said Mr. Hutton, grimly. "His orders must be dropping fifty per cent. In two months I wager there will be no more T.T. Tea, Ltd. And, of course, no Tea Supplies Company either—we'll soon see to that. By gad, Gregorson, it will be a relief! We don't want any more bright young sparks challenging an old and honourable trade!"

"And what will happen to young MacLaren? He was a clever youngster. I sometimes think you made a mistake, Hutton, in letting him leave us. You knew he was going to start this scheme. You knew he could get his supplies from some planter who was in with him. You should have given him his thousand a year and kept the fellow with us."

It was Mr. Hutton's turn to scowl.

"Hang it, Gregorson, I thought he'd come a purler in a month. I thought he'd come crawling back to us! It was exactly the lesson that that young man wanted. He was too cocksure by half. Clever youngster, you say? More than clever—brilliant. I thought we'd have him wanting back his old job long ago! But we'll get him yet. Sooner than you think, Gregorson. When he comes back, we'll give him a good job with us, and in a couple of years take him on the board. What do you think? I like MacLaren. But before that happens I swear I'll make him eat humble pie."

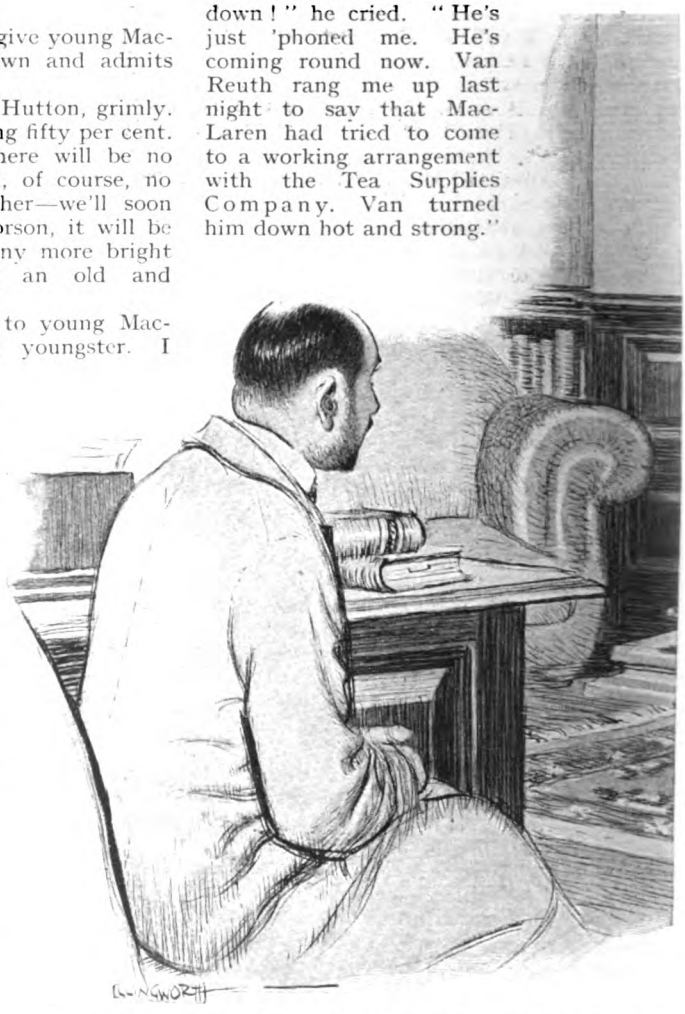
"A bit sweet on your daughter, isn't he, Hutton?"

"Yes. He's a thundering sight too good for the young wretch. And that's the truth. But I'll make him crawl! By thunder, Gregorson, I'll make him crawl!"

V.

IT was precisely five weeks later that Mr. Hutton bounced into his colleague's room, beaming.

"MacLaren's climbed down!" he cried. "He's just 'phoned me. He's coming round now. Van Reuth rang me up last night to say that MacLaren had tried to come to a working arrangement with the Tea Supplies Company. Van turned him down hot and strong."



Mr. Hutton jumped from his chair and started to pace the "Look here, Mr. Van Reuth," he said.

Mr. Gregorson grinned.

"So we've got him beat at last! Well, his confounded experiment has been a costly one for us. What does MacLaren suggest?"

"He wants us to take over his stock. He says he has got in hefty supplies, and a lot more coming through Suez now. He had been counting on his next publicity scheme trebling his turnover. But, instead, with Tea Supplies underselling him, his

**room. At length he came to a stop on the hearthrug. "I have a proposition to put to you."**

turnover has dropped more than half. We've beaten him at his own game. But, of course, he has no more idea than anyone else that the L. and E. are at the bottom of the Tea Supplies Company that has smashed him! Ho, ho, Gregorson! I nearly laughed into that telephone."

MacLaren looked a trifle pale when he entered the room of his late chief.

"What did I tell you, MacLaren?" said Mr. Hutton. "I can't help saying it! Didn't I tell you that you were a fool?"

"You were wrong, sir," replied MacLaren. "There was money in it. But that other firm starting up—well, it's knocked us out. Somehow or other they've been getting their supplies at chuck-away prices. I may as well admit it, sir. But I don't admit that my idea was wrong. It was deuced bad luck."

"How much have you lost, if you don't mind my asking?"

"Nothing, sir. I've paid everything, and given my friend Harry back his capital with seven per cent. interest. But if I go on, we'll come a cropper. As it is, I'll have enough over to—to—well, sir, as a matter of fact, it works out at the same screw as I was getting with you!"

Mr. Hutton put back his head and laughed.

"And I've had all the fun and experience thrown in," said MacLaren stolidly.

"Well, I'll take over your stock at to-day's prices. You're lucky—you're selling on a firm market. Come and see me on Tuesday and we'll complete the thing."

"Very good, sir. Er—there was one thing I was wondering. Could you see your way to give the fellow that helped me a job with you? Craig's his name. One of the best, sir."

"Send him along and we'll have a look at him, MacLaren. Come yourself at five-thirty on Tuesday."

It was five-thirty to the instant when MacLaren again seated himself in Mr. Hutton's waiting-room. During the subsequent interview, the managing director of the London and Eastern Syndicate was unusually pleasant. When they had signed and witnessed, he offered MacLaren a cigar.

"Can you keep a secret, MacLaren? Very well. Now that it's all over, I'll admit that your confounded T.T. Tea affair looked like giving us a knock."

"You say that, sir? Well, that's always something," said MacLaren with a sigh.

"Yes. We had to take steps to put an end to it. In fact—and I know I can trust you—the Tea Supplies Company that broke you was financed by us. Through a nominee, we held fifty-one per cent. of the shares."

MacLaren stared at him.

"Yes, and more," proceeded Mr. Hutton. "You'll be interested to know that, since T.T. Tea, Ltd., is out of existence, the Tea Supplies Company has been wound up also. The London and Eastern has paid sixty thousand pounds for it, half of which, of course, was ours before. Your madcap scheme has cost us thirty thousand, my lad. You should be very flattered. Of course, in a way, the money's not been wasted—it's a sort of insurance against other ambitious young bucks trying the same game as you did. And what do you propose to do with yourself now?"

"Don't know, sir," said MacLaren. "I was thinking of asking you, sir, if I could marry Evelyn. I thought a good long honeymoon out East wouldn't be a bad idea. I would like to go out East and thank Harry personally for the use of the capital he lent me."

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Hutton. "Marriage? Good long honeymoon? Brave words from a chap who has all but gone broke. I was going to offer you a good billet in the L. and E., but if you're going to talk that way, well——" Mr. Hutton shrugged his shoulders. "I consider we are being very generous, in view of what you've cost us."

"Very, sir. I'll be delighted to come back to you—at a figure. But you've made one mistake. You said I'd all but gone broke——"

**Mr. Hutton bounced into his colleague's room, beaming. "MacLaren's climbed down!" he cried. "He's just 'phoned me."**

"Well, haven't you? Didn't you come crawling to us to take over your stock and get you out of the mess?"

"I didn't crawl, and there was no mess," said MacLaren. "You told me in confidence you held fifty-one per cent. of the shares of my rival, the Tea Supplies Company—held them through a nominee, you said?"

"Exactly. It was rather a clever move."

"It was, sir. But I held the other forty-nine myself. And my nominee was good old Van Reuth, who's away back to his old job on Harry's plantation. I was thinking that just under thirty thousand pounds isn't such a bad capital to get married on. What do *you* say, sir?"

There was silence for a moment.

"The devil," said Mr. Hutton, softly.

Cecil Parkin.

# The Lighter Side of Test Matches

**Some Little-known Tales of Incidents and Fun during these "Fights" in England.**

By

## CECIL PARKIN

**(England's XI. and Lancashire C.C.C.)**

*ILLUSTRATED BY "RIP"*

THE series of Test matches which have been played in our own country against the Australians (for it is only with these that I shall deal in this article) contain many amusing and interesting little incidents and stories which are quite unknown to the general public, and even to the man who follows big cricket year after year. For of course, at best, even if a player or spectator sees or hears them, he can as a rule only be one of those who are on the ground at the time. And it is really astonishing how few spectators notice or hear some of the minor, but very interesting, incidents on such occasions.

As Maurice Tate, of Sussex and Test match renown, is likely to be an important figure in English bowling during the present summer, it may be well to recall that scene at Manchester during the exciting Test game there in 1902.

It may be remembered by those still living who saw this match that Fred Tate, Maurice's father, at a critical moment dropped a catch which afterwards proved very vital in influencing the result. Moreover, just when it came to Tate's turn to bat, and a one-wicket victory was in prospect for England if he could but keep his end up for a few minutes, it began to rain; and poor Tate, already sufficiently agonized, had to wait for hours in a terrible state of tension until the pitch was fit for resuming the game. Then—how can one even now blame him for it after such awful experiences?—he went in and failed. So Australia won a notable victory by three runs.

It was whilst some of the players were afterwards in their dressing-room expressing sympathy with Tate in his ill-luck that the good fellow's face lit up, both with pleasure at their kindness and with prophetic fervour. "I'm awfully sorry," he said, "that I came a cropper! But I have a little lad who will later on make up for England what his father has lost to-day."

Well, the grand old Sussex bowler was not far wrong, eh? And some of us are hoping that Maurice, who has already made the foe know his worth and fear him, will more than ever do so in the present series of Test matches in England. *Omen prosit!*

It is of course well known that the finest captain we ever had in English Tests, for

bringing good luck to his side on all occasions, was the Hon. F. S. Jackson, who won the toss in each of the five matches here in which he led his side. But what is *not* so well known is that Joe Darling, the celebrated Australian captain pitted against him, declared, "No team under Heaven could beat one led by such a 'lucky' cricketer as Jackson proved himself to be in every way during that summer!" So let us hope that we shall again be blessed this year with a captain equally "lucky," on more sides than one of the glorious Test games—in fact, with a second "Jacker."

Twenty years after!

See the anecdote of Fred and Maurice Tate on the previous page.

Now, strange bets and most curious happenings, together with some amazing predictions, have before to-day taken place in these matches, as we well know. But I am sure that the most surprising of them all is hardly known beyond the two or three men who were concerned in it, or heard of it at the time.

It occurred in that ever-memorable match at Lord's, when the M.C.C. beat Australia in 1896, owing chiefly to the marvellous bowling of A. D. Pougher (Leicestershire) and one or two others. Fred Huish, the Kentish stumper, was in the pavilion watching this astonishing game, and five of the best Australian wickets had fallen for eighteen runs. Folk around were stating their views as to how many the innings would reach, when, in a pure spirit of joke, Huish offered to accept "a hundred to one" that *they didn't score another run!*

His challenge was taken up, and he was chaffed strongly by several friends at this. But when three other wickets fell with the total still the same their faces lengthened much. When Charley Eady came in to bat, Huish was so excited that he offered to accept "fifty to one" that Eady was bowled first ball. More than one player around took this bet at once. But Eady *was* thus "caught and bowled"—by Pougher! Then, with the last wicket falling for a duck, the whole were out for those same eighteen runs, and Huish had brought off one of the most astounding and bewildering "doubles" ever won by man, I should think. Certainly nothing else in the way of betting against a decent team in any match ever equalled this, let alone surpassed it.

Speaking of Test games at Lord's, many amusing things have occurred therein which the outside world knows little about. When Ernie Jones, the fine fast bowler of one Australian eleven, was fielding out in the country, on the right of the screen as seen from the pavilion, it being a very hot afternoon, he for a moment or two seemed to drowse.

Just as a likely catch came his way and the Australians were watching for it to be made, Sid Gregory realized, to his consternation, that Jones was but half-awake, and was not seeing the catch at all! So he yelled, "Look out, Ernie!" and immediately Jones, seeing something dark flashing past him, shot out his hand and caught it.

Thousands clapped, thinking Jones had made a fine catch. But the spectators close by wondered what had occurred, for at that same moment they saw the ball rolling gently up against the rails near them! Then Jones opened his hand, and revealed—a sparrow! He had imagined, in his drowsiness, that this little black thing rushing past him was the ball!

Another quaint reminiscence of a Test at Lord's is that of May 27th, 1878, when the whole match was begun and ended in one day! It is probable that this may never happen again, and it is certainly to be hoped that England will never bat so feebly on any future occasion, seeing that the team from "down under" actually won by nine

F. S. Jackson won the toss in each of the five Test matches here in which he led his side.

wickets, after polishing off our own eleven twice, and themselves having one whole innings, with sufficient of the second to attain victory—all between twelve o'clock and six-thirty!

Our Yorkshire friend, old Tom Emmett, holds the reputation, I think, for being the author of the *most* witty sayings on the field at various times. But Albert Craig, the "Surrey rhymester" who came from Yorkshire too, was perhaps even wittier than Tom, and now and then gave back some very capital retorts to chaff from the spectators. It is one of these which I certainly should set down as equal to any other I have ever heard of at cricket. And this, too, was during a Test match at Lord's.

Amongst those who had tried to take a rise out of the genial Craig during one of his amusing little speeches to the crowd was a jovial parson. But nobody ever found Craig unequal to the occasion. So, after the parson had made a rather smart point (there being several other clergy seated around on the mound), Albert got *his* bit in!

"Gentlemen," he said, with that whimsical look of his, "I always like addressing an audience at Lord's. They are *so* bright, *so* intelligent, *so* knowing! There is no crowd like this at Lord's, though I am sure you are not always all the Lord's people!"

Craig also got in another clever hit at a noted Test on the Oval. A very slow-scoring batsman (I feel pretty certain it was Scotton, of Notts, on that great occasion when he was in with Dr. W. G. Grace) remained sixty-seven minutes without scoring!

During this trying period Craig was hawking his "poems" near the Vauxhall entrance to the ground when a jovial spectator, to raise a laugh, in which he succeeded well, said:—

"By Jove, Craig, but you've made a lot of money out of us! When are you going to retire?"

On which the "poet" replied like a shot, amidst great laughter, "Well, gentlemen, I shall never desert you till—till—till—good old Scotton has *completed* his innings!"

I have more than once heard discussions, between men who had fair opportunities for knowing, as to which was the very finest catch ever made in a Test match. Of these two or three are generally agreed as standing out pre-eminently above the rest: the one made by Fred Grace at the Oval in 1880, when he got rid of Bonnor; that of George Ulyett, at Lord's, in the same year; and one by Wilfred Rhodes at the Oval, in the immortal match of 1902. All these three have their own supporters as "the greatest ever"; but I should specially like to say a word or two about the first couple.

The late C. W. Alcock, no mean judge, declared that he had never seen any catch

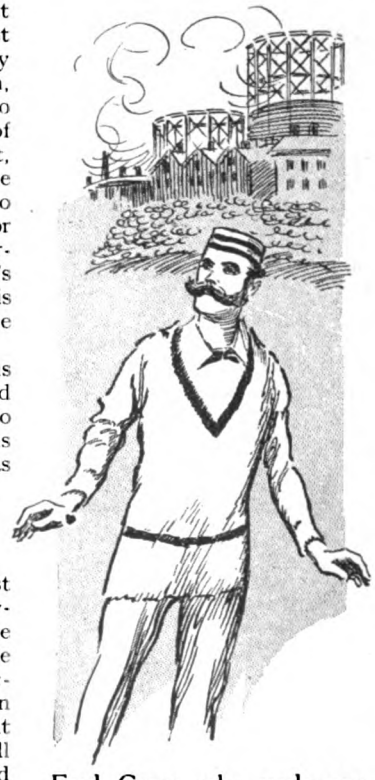
Craig and the clergy.

"There is no crowd like this at Lord's, though I am sure you are not always all the Lord's people!"

to surpass Fred Grace's. And Fred himself used to say later that his heart fairly stopped whilst he was *waiting* for this catch—it was one of the giant's highest and hardest efforts. Which is saying much indeed! The wonderful catch had a sad sequel, for within a fortnight after making it the genial Fred was dead—from a chill caught during a railway journey.

As to Ulyett's wondrous catch, that also was from the terrific-smiting Bonnor, but it took place at Lord's. Dr. Grace himself, who had seen his brother Fred's, used to assert that Ulyett's was the greatest catch ever made on any field he had known, which, perhaps, ought itself to settle the premiership of this worthy honour. But, as George Giffen, the famous Australian who was batting with Bonnor at the time, warmly corroborated the Doctor's statement ever after, this should certainly put the seal on the debate.

"Bonnor went in for us third wicket down," said Giffen, "on purpose to knock off the dangerous Yorkshireman, who was bowling. And certainly 'G. J.' did his best to fulfil his mission! He got a four, and then made one of the mightiest drives I have seen. Everyone looked down the ground to see where the ball landed, and the spectators there began to open a space in the ring for it to drop. But the ball never reached the crowd at all! Ulyett shot up his arm, and, meeting the ball with just the right spot in his hand, held it in perfectly incredible fashion! This was in my opinion the most brilliant catch I have ever seen."



**Fred Grace, who made one of the finest catches ever seen in a Test match.**

Though the splendid catch by Rhodes when he got rid of J. J. Kelly during the first innings of Australia at the Oval in 1902 will not easily be forgotten, yet at the same time I cannot regard it as being quite on a par with the two wonderful efforts above mentioned. They undoubtedly seem to have every right to be considered the grandest catches we in England have seen in the long series of Test games here.

Many folk have spoken at times about the tension and excitement of Test matches, and of their curious effect on spectators as well as on the players themselves. The amazing excitement at Manchester when Tate was bowled, as I have already described, and our foemen won by three runs; that tremendous outbreak at the Oval in 1902, after we had won by a wicket; the cheering mass in 1896, when the M.C.C. got Australia out for eighteen, and other similarly fine finishes, all have their own little tales and incidents worth noting.

I remember Mr. Alcock, of Surrey, once told how he was walking round the Oval, just to get rid of some of his excitement after the Australians gained that astonishing victory there in 1882 by seven runs, when England had only needed thirty-four to win, with seven good wickets to fall. The famous Surrey secretary told how, as he was going past the Press box, he came across an old and well-known amateur, a regular *habitué* of the Oval too, leaning over a seat in the stand, as if either unconscious or worse.

Mr. Alcock, half-alarmed, touched him gently on the back and asked if anything was wrong. The man turned to him a white face, still working with agitation, and answered slowly:—

"No, nothing really wrong. But I don't know yet whether to cry or to be sick!"

That is almost, if not quite, equal to the excited fellow at Leeds who, when Jackson there made one hundred and forty-four not out against Australia in July, 1905, began shouting at top of his voice: "A'm as pleased as if somebody had hitten me wi' hauf a brick!" The man was, in fact, so excited that he didn't really know what he *was* saying!

Probably the most astounding case of sheer impudence at a Test match was seen at the Oval in 1878, when Barratt, of Surrey, took all the ten Australian wickets for forty-three runs. Our gallant antagonists themselves presented him with the ball, mounted in silver, and having a suitable inscription, as well as with a five-pound note.

Bonnor, the terrific-smiting Australian.

The crowd was naturally delighted, and round the ground went two or three men making a collection on Barratt's behalf, with the approval (they said !) of the Surrey authorities. The public, in sheer gratitude for the wonderful performance, gave liberally, and quite a fine sum was contributed. But the worthy Barratt got none of it ! The men were actually members of a clever gang of light-fingered gentry, and managed to decamp with the whole amount without anybody suspecting their *bona fides !*

The Australian teams over here at various times have, of course, occasionally had different conditions to contend with from those often found in their own land, just as our men going there have had. But, on the whole, the weight of novelty and difficulty previously unmet with has been against *us*, I think. No one can ever tell what new feature may arise in cricket, least of all in Test matches. But it is safe to say that no player from " Down under " who comes here this summer will have to wear smoked spectacles for three weeks, owing to the intense glare of the sun affecting his eyes badly, as had Harry Makepeace (Lancashire) when he accompanied Mr. Douglas's eleven to Australia in the winter of 1920–21. It must have been both trying and difficult for such a batsman as Makepeace to be compelled to wear dark glasses throughout a keen match !

One of the curiosities of cricket is the way many famous players, undoubtedly of the very first class, never could do themselves justice in Test games, although doing marvellously in most others. There used to be a general idea that Patsy Hendren was one of these ; and indeed his record in many such trials then went far to prove it. But Patsy has at any rate reinstated himself in the good opinion of the public by recent displays in these big games.

Yet it must be frankly confessed that George Hirst, Scofy Haigh, and some others of the very best never did themselves the fullest justice in Tests, looking at the matter from the broadest angle. On the other hand, Jack Hobbs, Wilfred Rhodes, F. S. Jackson, Dr. Grace, and a few more one might mention were always equal to the greatest occasion in that way. Nay, indeed, the bigger the crisis the more did those great players come off triumphant, as a general rule.

Meeting the ball with just the right spot in his hand, Ulyett held it in perfectly incredible fashion.

Whom have we to-day that the Australians may well fear for this same cause? I should say that Hobbs, Sutcliffe, Tate, and Woolley are nowadays our champions in this respect. If you have read what Warwick Armstrong wrote some years back, what M. A. Noble says in his recent volume anent "Gilligan's men," and what other prominent Australians have said or written at various times, you can fairly well decide for yourselves who are the men here that Australia is to-day a bit afraid of.

ARMSTRONG wrote of Hobbs, as long ago as 1912, in a sort of prophetic vein: "We have excellent reason to fear what Jack Hobbs may do, once he gets going. As a first-wicket batsman I have always thought him one of the very finest I have ever known. His boundless confidence, his easy play of the ball, his resolute attack of bowling right from the beginning, are sufficient to dismay any bowler from the very start, and to upset his equilibrium. And once a bowler gets thus upset, it is ten to one you have beaten him for the day! . . . I do not know any better man for undertaking *this* job, too, than the Surrey star!"

Another Australian critic of eminence, speaking of "Men whom Australia may well fear," said: "There are a few older players, of whom Woolley and Hearne are types, who are still batsmen that any eleven are tremendously glad to see the backs of! And we are well aware that there are two or three younger men in England, whom Australia itself has not yet seen, whose prowess already has made us feel that they are to be taken very seriously when met with on the field of battle at cricket."

Tate was called by several professional critics and many old Test match players out in the far Dominion, "The best living bowler in the world." So that it is quite certain the coming team will not face Tate, if only he be at his finest, with any sense of security or cock-sureness. Let us trust that the noted Sussex bowler *will* be up to the mark, therefore, this summer, and even excel himself if such be possible.

As for Sutcliffe, Mr. Noble and others had not sufficient words to praise his splendid doings in the last tour in Australia. He made records (and friends) galore, and "Even the ranks of Tuscany were all impelled to cheer"—if I may slightly alter the famous lines—which they did splendidly and unstintingly. Therefore we may be perfectly certain that Sutcliffe will never go to the wicket at Lord's, Kennington, Leeds, Manchester, or Nottingham without the visiting team half-fearing that century of his which seems almost as certain to them as the innings itself.

It has before been mentioned how lucky F. S. Jackson was in winning the toss when captaining England. But there is another very good tale anent Australian tossing also. Lord Hawke was captaining an English eleven against an Australian one, with the noted George Giffen as its leader. The latter threw up the coin, after Hawke had said: "Now, George, if I call woman it's a tail!"

When the coin fell, and his lordship claimed the win, Giffen, somehow not clear, wanted to toss again, but the other said:—

"No, not at any price! In all my life I never call anything but woman!"

This seems just about the same as Gilligan's idea of always calling "Head." Which caused one joking Australian to exclaim during the last tour: "We only need a captain who can get the right spin on the coin in order to win the toss every time!"

It would mightily please the crowds this season at the Tests if we could get a few batsmen to hit out as lustily and confidently as used to do some of the players in past days. Big hitters galore have appeared in Test matches here, but chiefly, I am bound to say, on the Australian sides. Bonnor, Massie, Lyons, Trott, etc., were cases in point, whilst our own array similarly were led by Jessop. But we have not often come up to them in this item, and it would be both encouraging and inspiring this year if we could drive a Gregory, Mailey, or Grimmett clean out of the field!

Who that saw it is likely ever to forget Mr. W. H. Game's square-leg hit, off the great Spofforth, right out of the Oval for six in a Test there long ago? The ball went not very high, but with tremendous speed and force, clean over the fence, down Clayton Street, and just short of the famous Kennington Road! This is still believed to be the very finest "big hit" ever known at the Oval; and if one or two of our fellows could get a similar stroke in now and then this year it would do us an immense amount of good, and certainly delight the thousands of spectators hugely.

I was hoping that the authorities at Lord's last year—or rather its ground staff—on the usual Christmas-card they send out, would have given us either a replica (duly "improved") or something resembling the noted card they so kindly sent us not long ago, after an English team out in the Antipodes had not been all that we hoped. Moreover, the sentiment put forth on that card so exactly hits off what we are to-day all desiring that I may well be

forgiven for jotting down here the verse it bore:—

*"Ring out the old, the game that's lost;*
*Regretting naught of what it cost;*
*Ring in some bowling fast with guile,*
*Some batting of a forcing style!"*

I have no doubt that, if England can only live up to this capital maxim therein expressed, we shall in the Test games of 1926 prove more than conquerors. "Bowling *fast* with guile!" "Batting of a forcing style!" Yes, those are the two great desiderata for England to-day.

We may take it for granted that the ladies will come along stronger than ever at all the big matches this year. Their interest in cricket of the best type; their growing knowledge of the finer points of the game; their keen patronage and enthusiasm, have been increasing fast every season since the war. But this year is likely to see all records broken in this respect. I hope, however, that we shall not find many of them so simple anent the game as the one of whom Mr. Gilligan recently told an excellent story.

Lord Hawke and George Giffen tossing.
"Now, George, if I call woman it's a tail!"

This young woman was at a dinner-party where the noted captain of our last team out in Australia was being honoured, and, placed next to the hero himself, she deemed it well to show both her keen interest in and wide knowledge of the game. But she gave Mr. Gilligan a puzzler, all the same, and made it very difficult for him to restrain his propensity to burst out in hearty laughter.

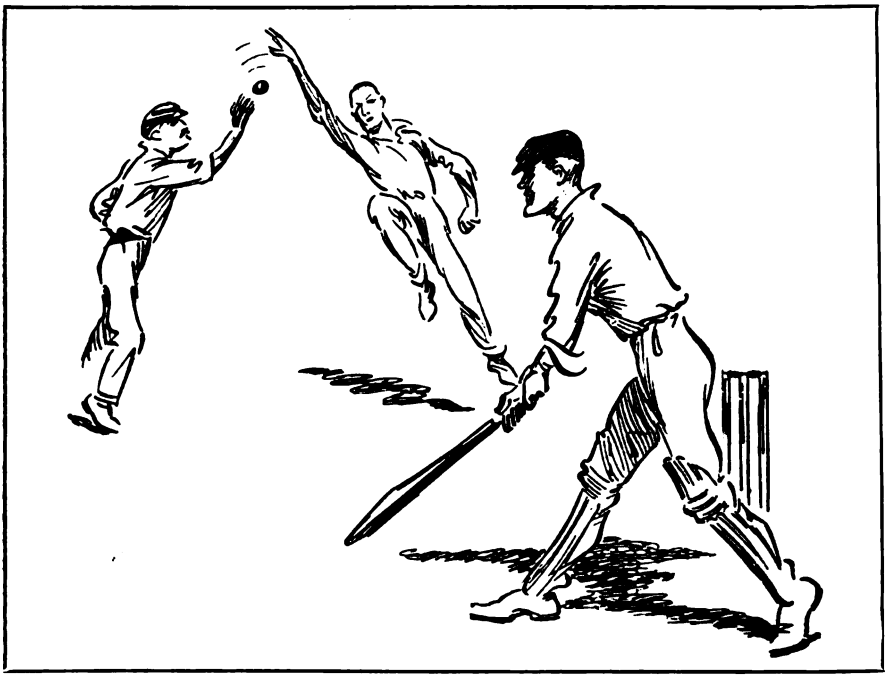
"And oh, Mr. Gilligan," she exclaimed, after praising his team's efforts out there, "you yourself are a great bowler, aren't you? Now *do* tell me, have *you* ever taken all the eleven wickets?"

The "great bowler" had to explain, as gently and seriously as he could, that he never *had*, up to the present, accomplished this wonderful feat. But when the fair one went on sympathetically to hope that one of these days he *would* accomplish even *that*, the Sussex skipper felt it was time to get away from the subject as soon as possible, ere he was compelled willy-nilly to give full vent to his amusement.

It has frequently been said during the past two years that if there is one spot in the fielding where our work is not now so great as it used to be, that spot is at slip. And I fancy a little truth underlies this contention. When one remembers Tunnicliffe, Len Braund, R. E. Foster, George Lohmann, and A. O. Jones at slip, it does seem fairly clear that we have no equal to such a quintette there to-day.

But even so, we are hoping to see a bit of the best, which may well be set beside what we were often seeing there in Test matches of old. Do you remember that time when Victor Trumper (finest and most polished of all the great batsmen whom Australia has ever sent to England) was caught in the slips in a marvellous fashion? The ball fairly hurtled through the air towards where Braund was fielding at slip. He could only just reach it after an upward jump, and its speed would perhaps have prevented him from holding it in any case. But he gave it a side-knock towards where Archie Maclaren was standing alongside him; and the ever-ready Archie threw out his strong hand and caught the ball fair and square. Another catch or two such as that by the slips would very mightily hearten us all during the coming contests with our good visitors this year.

There is one player coming from Australia who reminds us tremendously of our own Dave Denton in bygone days. As you know well, Dave was always regarded as the luckiest batsman then playing, owing to the times he was missed in the field; the ways he escaped "death" at the wicket; the manner in which weather, opponents, ground, and spectators alike—everything,



Victor Trumper caught in the slips in marvellous fashion.

in fact—seemed to do all they could on his behalf!

Now Herbert Collins, the Australian captain, is *their* mascot in precisely similar fashion. As used to be the case with Denton, whoever misses Collins will have to pay a very heavy price for the lapse, you may be sure. The gods fight for him so much in any case that it will need every effort our men can make to combat them, without our giving them extra help!

It used to be a regular joke, when Denton was coming in, for an opposing captain to say to his men, "Now, boys, who's going to *miss* Dave?" And out in Australia it has become quite the custom for spectators to bet as to naming the fieldsman who will catch or run out Collins, so frequently do his opponents fail in this!

Collins is a really fine batsman, one who can score fast or slow as the occasion demands, who can simply stay at the wicket or hurry up against the clock, as the game requires. But he got more than one life last time Australia was in England, and it is sincerely to be hoped that we shall not allow this to occur too often again. If we do, then the "Ashes" will be in serious danger of stopping where they are for some years longer.

Just one other reminiscence of great Tests. It was at Lord's that a fair spectator, on that first line of seats which are in front of the dining-rooms, was constantly rising at critical times to look around for some friend whom she had missed, and so obscured the view of hundreds standing or sitting behind her own row of seats. Cries of "Sit down, please!"; "Thank you, ma'am!"; "We can't see through you!"; and "We came to see the game, lidy!" had no effect on this woman except to make her throw scornful glances at the barrackers. She was a regular nuisance with her persistent rising and the time she remained standing, and the angry crowd was at its wits' end to know what to do.

But "politeness always pays," says the old proverb! And there was one man there who was tremendously polite. Next time the good lady rose he said, in a most seductive voice: "*Doesn't* she look pretty? Did you *ever* see a more beautiful *nose* and *mouth*?"

She sat down hurriedly, and never got up again! Evidently she not only missed the friend she had lost, but she had made many new enemies, in addition! However, this may be a good tip for any spectators who are similarly troubled during the coming season on our big crowded grounds!

For the one thing no woman can stand is to have a whole ring of unknown people around sarcastically twitting her on prettiness which *may*—or may *not*—really exist!

# In Confidence

By

## W. H. WILLIAMSON

*ILLUSTRATED BY J. M. FAULKS*

JABEZ B. SILLOM was enjoying his visit to England. The trip on the *Mauretania* had been excellent, and there seemed nothing promising in the weather to spoil the next twenty-four hours, at the end of which land would be reached.

Mr. Sillom had enjoyed the voyage not merely *qua* voyage but also because he had, after having been two days at sea, made friends with Mr. Dorset.

Mr. Dorset had sat next to him at table, and had been consistently agreeable and entertaining from the start, but there had been nothing between them of that nature which strikes the spark of sympathy and makes for friendship till they sat together one evening and discussed the war debts and sundry other topics of equal pricklicality and Mr. Sillom found that his views were remarkably wise and sound.

Mr. Sillom was a little surprised. He had not expected to find such easy and pleasant confirmation for the American point of view from an Englishman. But Mr. Dorset was a much travelled man; very wide of view, fluent and graceful of speech, of admirable manners.

He tickled Mr. Sillom's palate by telling him intimate stories of the Prince of Wales, of other members of the Royal Family, and of prominent members of the British aristocracy.

"Afraid I've let my tongue run a bit loose to-night," said Mr. Dorset.

"It's been very interesting, very interesting indeed," replied Mr. Sillom.

"Suppose I have been a little indiscreet," Mr. Dorset added, as if he were reproaching himself, but finding an excuse in Mr. Sillom.

"Not at all. Well, if you have, it has been mighty entertaining. Never heard so much aristocratic gossip in my life before. It's been real interesting to hear these little anecdotes about royalty and dukes —makes you realize how human they are."

Mr. Dorset laughed.

"They are very human indeed when you know them properly."

Mr. Sillom nodded.

That was the starting point. Mr. Sillom took a fancy to Mr. Dorset and found that, no matter what conversational hare he started, Mr. Dorset would give him a most entertaining run.

Hence sundry little confidences. They will occur even to the most reserved of men. And neither Mr. Sillom nor Mr. Dorset was particularly reserved, for that matter. One uses the word "particularly" with a little discrimination, for it was not till the day before they were to arrive at Southampton that Mr. Dorset casually let out that his name was not Dorset at all.

That might have surprised Mr. Sillom. Perhaps it did; but Mr. Dorset said it so quietly, so reassuringly, so confidently that Mr. Sillom felt he was being trusted.

"Ha!" he said.

"I have come back very hastily. Got a cable asking me to return by the first boat. Something most important—almost sensational——" he added, casually, as if he would like to mention what it was.

"H'm!" said Mr. Sillom.

Mr. Dorset nodded.

"I'd like to tell you. Perhaps I will later. Extraordinary thing—most extraordinary. It will astonish England—astonish other people too, for that matter. It s —er—er——" He paused. "Most amazing. Awfully sorry to hint at these things like this. But if I get the chance I'll—— You'll hear it soon enough all the same, if it goes through. And I expect it will go through now or they wouldn't have cabled for me. That's the reason—on account of the scheme, I mean—I am travelling as 'Mr. Dorset.'"

There was a pause.

"Don't give me away," Mr. Dorset whispered in his charming way.

And that was that.

IT was naturally not surprising that, when Mr. Sillom asked Mr. Dorset if he could recommend a decent hotel in London, Mr. Dorset said, "Beggie's. Always go there myself."

"If it's good enough for you, it'll be good enough for me," said Mr. Sillom. "You won't mind my going there?"

"Mind—I shall be delighted. You'll be charmed with the place. It isn't one of these big new hotels; but it's select. The best people go there. You have to pay for that, but you get what you want."

"I can pay," said Mr. Sillom, tersely.

"In my hours of ease, when I have an hour or two to spare," Mr. Dorset said genially, "I'll pilot you round London if you like."

"That's real kind."

"Not at all."

And Mr. Dorset seemed to have just the right knack to get porters and taxi-men to attend to him, not only speedily, but well.

He tipped liberally, but Mr. Sillom noticed merely the service.

For Mr. Sillom, then, the voyage was naturally one out of the ordinary. He, being a multi-millionaire, was accustomed to travel with a certain ease and luxury; but he frequently had to assert himself. He had now and then been known to tell people who he was—Jabez B. Sillom, President of the Akinso Railway, a director of the East-West Banking Corporation, inventor of the famous Sillom boot clip, et cetera, et cetera. But Mr. Dorset seemed to get more attention with a mere nod of his head than the multi-millionaire after a recital of his investments and possessions.

Something in the breed, thought Sillom. This Mr. Dorset, a lord perhaps, has it in the blood. Walks easily, talks easily, commands easily. But it's darned funny how these other guys tumble to it at once. On the boat, on land. Wonder if it was the same in New York? Guess not. Mebbe. Mebbe. Something in the blood.

One sees that Mr. Sillom was impressed.

AT Beggie's Hotel the same thing happened. The two men arrived together, but it was Mr. Dorset who got the real attention. Not that Mr. Sillom had anything to complain of. Not at all. But the fact was plain: Mr. Dorset was like a man expected. Mr. Sillom was the ordinary visitor.

After all, Mr. Dorset's suite had been booked and he was expected, so there was perhaps nothing in what happened. Only it impressed Mr. Sillom.

After dinner that evening, when they were sitting together smoking their cigars, a military-looking man came in to see Mr. Dorset.

They greeted each other in friendly fashion and Mr. Dorset introduced the visitor—"Major Dashington—Mr. Sillom."

"Pleased to meet you, sir," said Mr. Sillom, thrusting out a welcoming hand.

Major Dashington had suave, agreeable manners also, though to the keenly discerning he had also the air of a man who had lived hectically—perhaps in torrid climes.

He talked to Mr. Dorset generally of the voyage and gave him gossip of "Bobbie" and "Millie" and "Stickie" and people with funny names, adding news of the Prince of Wales and sundry people with titles. Suddenly he said in semi-whisper to Mr. Dorset:—

"You're to go to the Palace for dinner to-morrow."

"So soon?"

"Yes. The thing has to be fixed up because the King and Queen are going to Sandringham. You've driven things rather close through being away."

"Awfully sorry. Shall I get the usual command?"

"Yes. It's on the way. You may get it to-night."

"Good."

Mr. Sillom was impressed. He was even more impressed when Major Dashington, after saying good-bye with charming courtesy, turned round and said:—

"Oh! Duke——"

"'Sh!"

The Major laughed.

"Mr. Dorset. Sorry! The other details are all right, aren't they?"

"Yes. You mean the duke—both of them?"

"Yes."

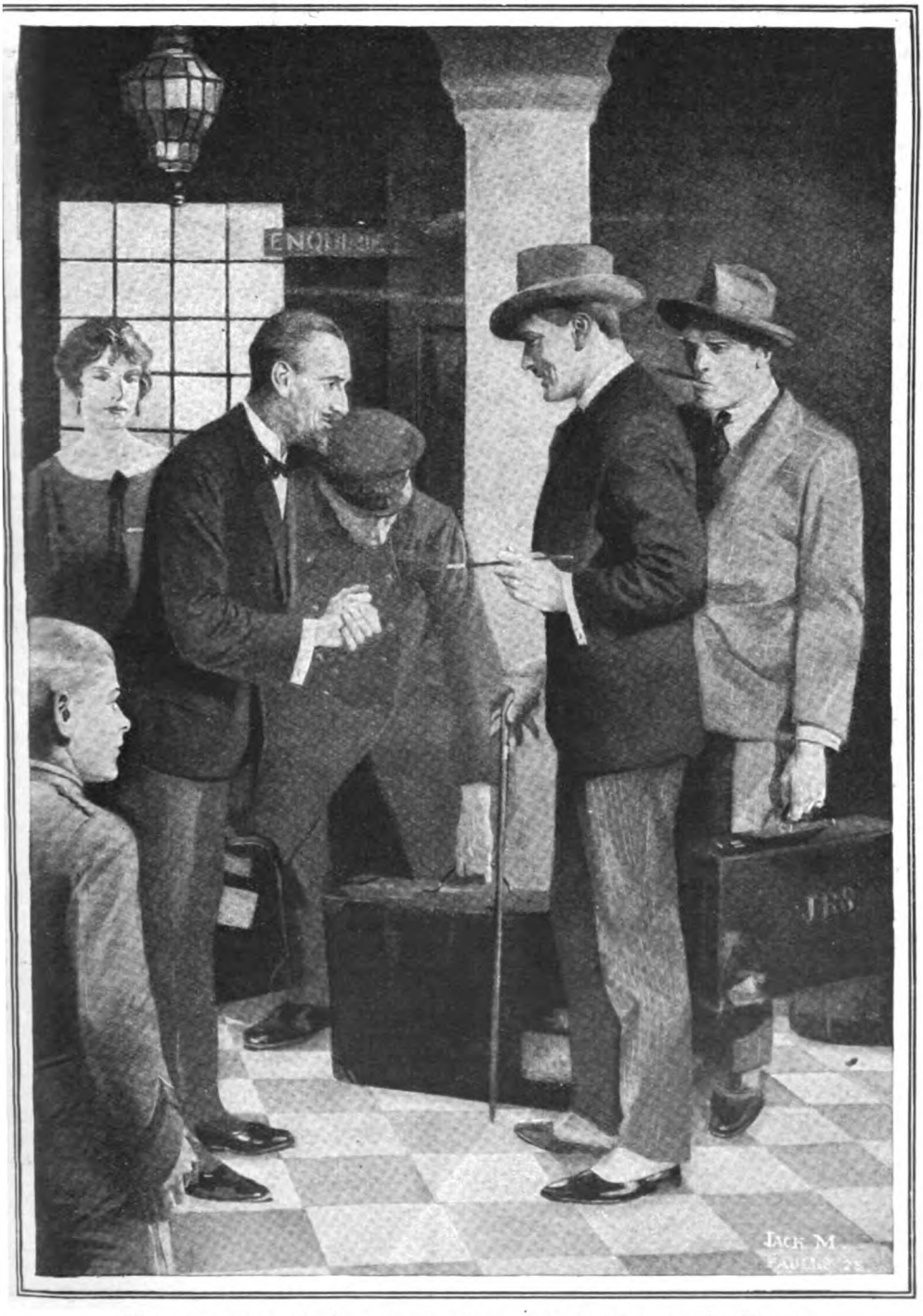
"Quite all right."

"Good. We shall have to fix it up firmly at once."

Mr. Sillom heard most of that. He couldn't help it. These two had that clear, resonant voice which refused to be shut out. Particularly if they happen to be saying something you feel most desirous of hearing.

Mr. Sillom had already been prepared for a great deal and had his curiosity tickled to an almost inordinate extent, so that when he heard Mr. Dorset addressed as "Duke" and heard also the checking "'Sh!" he was uncommonly stirred. Uncommonly pleased, too. He was flattered. He was saying to himself:—

"Gosh! Just what I guessed. Sure. Course he is. Member of the British aristocracy. A duke. Gee! Not that I'm going to be darned well patted on the head by any antediluvian duke. I'm an American citizen an' as good as any man on earth." This came suddenly, in a sort of sweeping



The two men arrived at the hotel together, but it was Mr. Dorset who got the real attention.

gust, as if his feelings were erring a little and some old home exhortations came to him at the right moment to keep his feet on the straight American path. But the next moment—having purged himself, as it were, of heresy—he said to himself: "Guessed it. He's a duke. Sure. Going to the Palace, too. That's where King George lives."

After all, he can't be blamed if he endowed Mr. Dorset with a certain glamour, some magnificence.

He looked at him now with just a touch of meekness, that hint of admiration which pleases the receiver so much.

"So it's duke, eh?" he said.

Mr. Dorset smiled and thrust out a delicately protesting hand.

"Dashington is foolish. Still, we are old friends—Eton together."

"H'm!"

"And Oxford."

"H'm!"

"Very well connected, Dashington. Relation of the Duke of Norfolk and a distant connection of the Royal Family."

"Gosh! Some blood!"

"Yes. You probably heard: I am to dine at the Palace."

"Buckingham Palace?"

"Yes."

"Gee! With George an'—the King and Queen?"

"Yes. Rather informal. Some private business. I may tell you one day."

"Gee! You must be a top-notcher!"

Mr. Dorset smiled faintly.

"What are you going to do to-morrow?" he asked.

"Nothing particular."

"I'll trot you round, if you like. Show you a bit of social London."

"You know you're real kind."

"Oh!" This deprecatingly. "I've thoroughly enjoyed your company. A man isn't kind who insists on enjoying himself."

MR. DORSET, having a free day, took Mr. Sillom in tow. They saw London well. Mr. Dorset certainly drove him to one or two well-frequented monuments, but it was the going to little nooks, that seemed unspotted by the world, which pleased Mr. Sillom most. That and the easy way it was done showed Mr. Dorset to be the true aristocrat. As they went down Park Lane, for instance, he pointed out the house of the Marquess of Londonderry. "The Earl of Scarbrough's place." "Sir Philip Sassoon's." "Lady Louis Mountbatten's."

In Berkeley Square his hand gently pointed out "Lord Rosebery's." "Queenborough's." "Lansdowne House. That's where Gordon Selfridge lives."

"Selfridge! Gee! Lord who's house?"

"Lord Lansdowne's."

"Gee!"

"Selfridge has done well. He does you well, too," and Mr. Dorset smiled as if he had frequently enjoyed Mr. Selfridge's hospitality.

In St. James's Square there was the same easy familiarity. "Lord Astor's——"

"Astor, eh?" Mr. Sillom was too crammed with interest to speak much. "American family, that."

"Yes—The Earl of Strafford's"—"Duchess of Norfolk's——"

As they dashed through Mayfair, Mr. Dorset seemed able to spot all the houses of the great.

"Well," thought Mr. Sillom, "I 'spect he goes there as one of them."

This impression was confirmed a day later.

"Fixed up anything for to-night, Mr. Sillom?"

"No." The fact was Mr. Sillom was now ready to go with or do anything Mr. Dorset suggested, for Mr. Dorset had almost assumed the *rôle* of entertainer, of guide and director.

"Sorry I shall have to leave you. Care to have Dashington—you remember him, Major Dashington, who came here the day we arrived?"

"Sure."

"Would you care for him to take you to a show or pilot you anywhere? He'd be delighted. He's a nice chap—very entertaining."

Mr. Sillom was taken by Major Dashington that night to a show, and just as they reached the hotel he learned that Mr. Dorset was dining with Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Winston Churchill, and the King's Private Secretary.

That item of news sent up the Dorset stock enormously in Mr. Sillom's estimation. Not a word from himself about that. And the average man surely would have been unable to refrain from boasting about dining with Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Winston Churchill, and the King's Private Secretary. He must have mentioned it. But Mr. Dorset hadn't said a word. Gentleman that. Real aristocrat. Takes it natural almost.

When Major Dashington and Mr. Sillom arrived at the hotel, Mr. Dorset was there to welcome them. Dashington said, "Have they gone?"

"Yes."

"Satisfactory?"

"All settled."

"Everything?"

"No hitch at all. Papers to be signed at once."

Major Dashington whistled.

Mr. Sillom listened—he couldn't help, of course.

Mr. Dorset turned to him.

"Well, enjoyed the show?"

"Sure."

Anecdotes, gossip, bed.

IT was the next day that Mr. Sillom realized the importance of Mr. Dorset.

They were in Mr. Dorset's private sitting-room. On the table was a map.

Mr. Sillom had called as usual, and, when he saw the outspread map and other papers, said, "Guess I'm disturbing you."

"Not at all."

"Sure? I don't want to put you off anything. I'll get off on my own or wait for you in the lounge, if you like."

"Sit down. Or, look here——"

Mr. Sillom looked and saw a scale map.

"Buckingham Palace," he read, and was curious.

Mr. Dorset nodded.

"That's the big scheme," he said, quietly.

"Big scheme?"

"Yes. Sit down. It's practically all settled now, so I can tell you about it. Only—don't mention it to anybody yet."

"I can keep my tongue still."

"It may get out any day now, and then it will be everybody's secret. But you can understand now why I have had to be so discreet. We are buying Buckingham Palace."

Mr. Sillom stared.

"But I thought King George and Queen Mary lived there."

"So they do—at present."

"Are they going to move?"

Mr. Dorset nodded.

"Extraordinary how things happen. I don't mind telling you now I happen to be behind the scenes of a good many things. I go to the Palace very frequently."

"Buckingham Palace, eh?"

"Yes."

"You see the King and Queen there?"

"Oh, yes."

Mr. Dorset smiled genially.

"Say now! What—what's it like?"

"It's a big house. But there are other big houses, you know."

"Sure. But George and Mary—what are they like amongst themselves—at home, so to speak?"

"They are human beings."

Mr. Dorset's gesture was tolerant and genial.

"Sure. And you go there often. They think you're some — somebody — some duke."

Mr. Dorset laughed.

"I am," he said, "the Duke of Northumberland."

Mr. Sillom did not collapse or indulge in anything of the sensational type; but he was impressed. He was impressed to the point of silence for a moment, and then he said, "Duke of Northumberland, eh? Why —er—— Gee! Duke, but you've done me. You've put one across me handsome. You've—— Gee! But you are a top-notcher!"

"The fact is," said Mr. Dorset, "I had to be exceedingly careful. This is a scheme worth millions. If it had got out it might have been spoiled because some of the politicians would have wanted to put their fingers in the pie—and you don't want too many fingers, even if the pie does happen to be big."

"Guess your politicians are a bit like ours, eh?"

"Men are men all the world over. This wasn't a case of graft; but somebody might have intervened on sentimental grounds. The fact is, last year the drains at Buckingham Palace were found to be bad."

"You don't say!"

"Just what happened. Sore throats ran through the Palace. The King and Queen and practically all the Royal Family, as well as all the servants, were laid up with a sort of mumps—you must have seen all the fuss there was about it in the papers."

"I read *The New York World*. Don't remember. Might ha' been in an' I missed it. Don't read everything that's in the papers — an' don't believe all I read either."

"They probably wouldn't make the same fuss about it over there. Here, there were questions asked in Parliament about it."

"Gee! You'd have thought the drains at Buckingham Palace—— Gosh!"

"That was the start of it. Now, as a matter of fact, the King got so fed up with the drains and the sore throats and the talk that, at a little dinner party one night at the Palace, he said he would sell the place. I forget now who asked him what he thought a fair price. It might have been Derby—or Devonshire—I forget now—but I do know the King said he would take a million. I said, 'I'd give you that, sir, for it.' 'It's yours,' he said, 'if you'd like to take it at that figure.' Candidly, I thought it over. I went to a friend of mine who's a big pot in the City and knows what's what financially and he opened his mouth wide. 'A million,' he said, 'a million! It's worth five millions at least.'"

Mr. Sillom whistled.

"You don't say——" he began.

"That's just what I do say," continued Mr. Dorset. "I told you it was a romance. The moment this friend of mine said that, I sat up and took notice. After all, the offer had been made. I could, if I liked, get

Buckingham Palace for a million pounds. Well, to cut a long story short, I instructed a big firm of land agents to value it for me privately. They said five millions was an under-estimate."

"Pounds—not dollars?"

"Pounds."

"You stand to make twenty million dollars on the deal, then?"

"About that. Romantic, isn't it?"

"Romantic! It's durned slick business. It's a gold-mine."

Mr. Dorset laughed.

"You can imagine how I felt when I heard this. I didn't want to take advantage of His Majesty's offer, so I got his Private Secretary, whom I know very well, to mention it again and see if he was really desirous of selling. He said yes. Then something happened which seemed to smash the scheme. I can't go into that. I went to America, really thinking the whole thing was hung up, and it was while I was there I got the cable to say the King had said that if I was willing to keep to my offer he would sell, but it must go through at once, and nothing must be known till the matter was really settled."

"Gee!"

"That is what brought me home, and at last," Mr. Dorset sighed and stretched his arms, "at last it is all ready for the blotting paper."

"It's gone through, then?"

"We must pay in the cheques to-morrow, I think it is. You know, Mr. Sillom, I like you. I've taken a fancy to you. I'm afraid I can't let you in on the ground floor for this, but I'll let you know what we propose to do, and if you feel inclined to invest you can do just what you like."

"That's real good of you."

"Not at all. If I'd met you sooner I'd have let you come in with us because I wanted an American in this business. We're going to develop the Buckingham Palace Estate so that it will be the choicest spot in Europe. Our intention is to turn the Palace itself into an hotel."

"Gee!"

"Eh? We can get wicked prices for rooms at the Palace. What d'you think the King's and Queen's rooms will fetch a night? We can charge what we like. It's a sentimental matter, and we can charge accordingly. Just look at this map—there are forty acres of ground; do you realize that? Forty acres in the choicest part of London."

Mr. Sillom was overwhelmed. He had often been mixed up with big deals himself, but he had never been at the heart of one so stirring as this. The sale of Buckingham Palace!

MR. DORSET, having once showed confidence in Mr. Sillom, proceeded to show him correspondence. There was a letter from Lord Derby stating that he had seen His Majesty, who had expressed his desire to get the matter settled before Parliament met. There was another, on Buckingham Palace notepaper, from the King's Private Secretary to the Duke of Northumberland, stating that His Majesty had been pleased to consider a generous offer of withdrawal made by the Duke and wished to thank him for it; but that His Majesty, having once passed his word, would not on any account go back on it.

Such correspondence thrilled Mr. Sillom.

"Those letters are valuable," he said.

"I suppose they have a certain value."

"And how many of you are in it?"

"Seven. We are forming a company. We each put down twenty-five thousand pounds at once—say a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars—and agree to pay the balance in three months' time. We are prepared to make up the million amongst ourselves, even if we have to mortgage something: after that, we may form a company or not. Here's my cheque already made out."

He took out a cheque payable to Major Dashington for twenty-five thousand pounds.

"Dashington is secretary for the moment. He knows everybody and has done a tremendous amount of work. Now I've talked shop long enough. When we've done business this morning I'll take you out in the country somewhere. You haven't been to Hatfield, I suppose?"

"Hatfield—where's that?"

"It's Lord Salisbury's place."

"Oh!"

"If we've time we'll go. They'll give us lunch——"

Then it was that Major Dashington broke in on them with a newspaper in his hand.

"Hullo, Dashy! what's up?" asked Mr. Dorset.

"Ah! Mr. Sillom." Major Dashington shook hands. "How are you? All right after last night?"

"More than all right, thanks to you."

"Can I tell you—a bit of business," Major Dashington said in a semi-confidential tone to Mr. Dorset.

"What is it?"

The Major made a slight gesture towards Mr. Sillom.

"I'll go," said Mr. Sillom. "It's business, I see."

"A bit private——" began the Major.

"Sit down, Sillom," said Dorset with a friendly push. "I've told our friend here all about it, so it doesn't matter now. What's the matter?"

"If he knows—but everybody will know to-day. Atheldan is dead."

"Atheldan dead!"

"Yes," and Major Dashington handed Mr. Dorset an evening paper.

Mr. Dorset read aloud:—

*SUDDEN DEATH OF LORD ATHELDAN.*

*The Earl of Atheldan died suddenly at two o'clock a.m. at his Scottish residence, Atheldene. We understand Lord Atheldan was one of a small group of people who propose to purchase Buckingham Palace from His Majesty. At the moment of going to press we have not been able to learn what effect Lord Atheldan's death will have on this sensational deal. Lord Tay succeeds to the Earldom.*

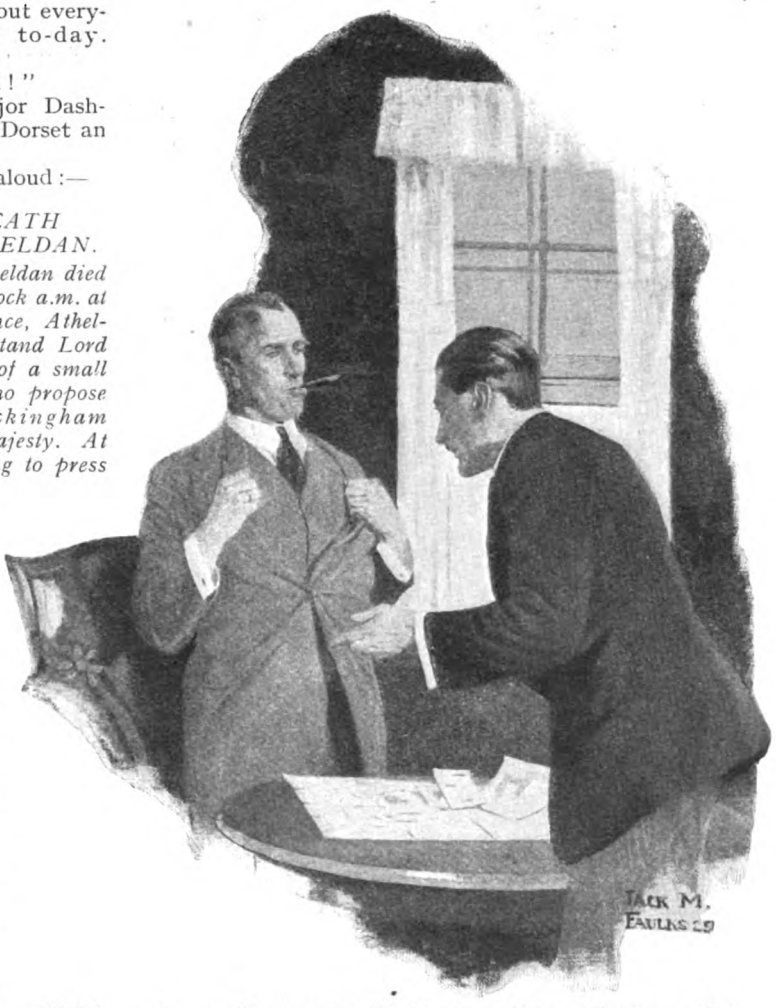
For a moment there was silence.

Mr. Dorset said, "I'm very sorry. Atheldan was one of the old school."

"Yes," added the Major. "Damned good sort. But what about the——" he nodded.

Mr. Dorset nodded and whistled.

"Knocks one out of our syndicate."




"We're going to develop the Buckingham Palace Estate so that it will be the choicest spot in Europe."

"Unless we get in Lord Tay."

"No, no. Wouldn't have him at any price—little scallywag!"

Mr. Dorset cast his eyes on Mr. Sillom.

Mr. Sillom returned the gaze. At first he wondered, then he guessed.

"I don't want to persuade you, Sillom," said Mr. Dorset, "but by a stroke of fortune there is a chance for you if you like. You mayn't have the money handy—or you mayn't like the scheme. Just read that," and he handed the newspaper to Mr. Sillom, who read for himself what Mr. Dorset had read aloud.

He looked up.

"How much do you want?"

"One hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars must be paid into the bank here to-morrow. Then the property is ours, subject to each one of us paying an additional" — he looked at some papers—"er—one hundred and seventeen thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven pounds odd."

"What's that in dollars?"

Major Dashington worked with a pencil and paper.

"Say five hundred and ninety thousand."

"Dollars?"

"Yes."

"Now what do I get for that?"

"You'll get a seventh share in the Buckingham Palace Syndicate. In fact, you will get just what I get, and Dashy here gets, and what Lord Atheldan would have

got. Of course, I'm delighted to give you this chance. It's a stroke of Providence. But don't go in unless you want. At the same time it's—well, it's a gold-mine. I could get a pass and take you over the Palace. No. Not to-day, to-morrow afternoon."

"We must find our man to-day. His Majesty has met us most magnanimously so far, but if this deposit isn't made to-morrow, there are a few at Court who will move heaven and earth to quash the scheme."

"Yes, yes. Pity to hurry you, Sillom. What d'you think? Now don't come in unless you really want. I'd love to have you with us and it will save us from being too dependent on Rothschild."

"I can manage it," said Mr. Sillom.

"Good. I'll introduce you to Lord Derby or the Duke of Devonshire if I can get hold of them, and you'll hear what they say——"

"I must cable," said Mr. Sillom ruminatively.

"We must have the money to-morrow by noon," said Dashington.

"You'll have it," said Mr. Sillom, and as he wrote out the cable he was saying to himself, "Whoever would have thought I should be owner—part owner—of Buckingham Palace?"

Mr. Dorset rang up the solicitor, who came to the hotel and was duly introduced to Mr. Sillom.

The necessary details were noted so that Mr. Sillom became a member of the Buckingham Palace Syndicate instead of the Earl of Atheldan, deceased. Cables from America to the bank honoured Mr. Sillom's draft to the extent of two hundred thousand dollars.

For the remainder of the day Mr. Dorset or Major Dashington or both were most attentive to Mr. Sillom. No trip was made to Hatfield, because a message came to say that Lord Derby might call at the hotel to see Mr. Sillom.

And truly enough, just before dinner Lord Derby called. Mr. Sillom was introduced and most favourably impressed with the genial way he was received by this distinguished nobleman. Lord Derby spoke in no half-enthusiastic fashion of the syndicate's hopes, and said he would have put down the money for Lord Atheldan's share as well as his own, if it had been necessary.

Sillom, Dorset, and Dashington dined together at Beggie's and then went to a musical comedy.

NEXT day the solicitor, Mr. Allaway, attended at the hotel with four cheques in his possession, one from the Earl of Derby, one from the Duke of Devonshire, one signed Rothschild, and another from a big City financier. Mr. Dorset produced his. Major Dashington did the same and Mr. Sillom handed his.

There was a certain air of suppressed excitement about the principals in this big transaction. Each seemed to feel he was doing something out of the common.

"What's the process now?" asked Mr. Sillom.

"This afternoon," said Mr. Allaway, "we shall meet the solicitor for the vendor and hand him the cheques. We have everything in order. I have been through the deeds with the other side."

And then the door opened and the faces of Mr. Dorset, Mr. Allaway, and Major Dashington were plainly expressive of a distinct consternation.

"Hullo, Jimmy!" said a voice rather familiarly.

Mr. Dorset was clearly wondering what to do.

So was Major Dashington.

So was Mr. Allaway.

"Well, I'm damned!" muttered Mr. Allaway.

At that moment three more plain-clothes men entered the room.

"Will you come quietly?" asked the man who had come in first and was presumably the inspector in charge.

"What's the——" Mr. Dorset hesitated.

The detective turned to Mr. Sillom.

"Have they got anything out of you?"

"What d'you mean?" asked Mr. Sillom, still clearly trying to grasp the heart of the situation.

"Has he got any money out of you?" the detective said, as he jerked his head in the direction of Mr. Dorset.

Then Mr. Sillom understood.

"Crooks," he muttered.

"Crooks," repeated the detective.

There was a moment's taut silence.

Mr. Sillom muttered, "A hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars."

"A hundred and twenty-five thousand. A pretty haul. Where is it?"

One of the assistants who had put his hands on the papers said, "There are some cheques here."

The inspector nodded.

"Will you go quietly?" he asked Mr. Dorset.

There was a moment's hesitation.

"I suppose you've got me," muttered Mr. Dorset, *alias* the Duke of Northumberland, *alias*, *alias*, *alias*——

The remark needed no confirmation, for there was a plain-clothes man behind each of the three crooks.

"We'll go quietly," said Mr. Dorset,

and his eyes avoided those of Mr. Sillom

"Crooks," muttered Mr. Sillom when he and the inspector were alone.

"Yes. The neatest band of confidence men we know. What did Pickle call himself?"

"Pickle? Who's Pickle?"

"Mr. Dorset."

"His name's Pickle, eh? Gee! He said he was the Duke of Northumberland."

The inspector laughed loudly.

"He has a nerve. The Duke of Northumberland!"

"He ain't a duke?"

"Just as much a one as you or I."

"Gosh!"

"What was the scheme?"

"They were buying Buckingham Palace."

"What?"

Mr. Sillom couldn't repeat it, for the inspector's laughter was so loud.

"That's the most priceless stunt he's had so far."

"But it was in the paper."

"Of course. They print anything. They get the current issue of to-day's paper and print their news in the 'Stop Press' gap—and show it you, of course."

"Of course, I'm delighted to give you this chance. It's a stroke of Providence. But don't go in unless you want."

"Gee! And I thought they were letting me in on the ground floor."

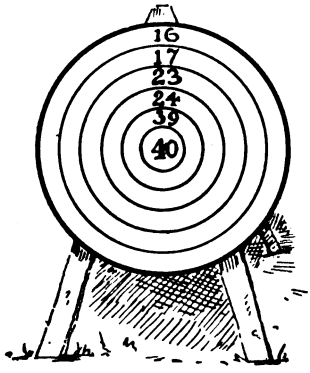
"Thank your stars we spotted Jimmy when he left New York. He was shadowed when it was seen he was with you, and when we read your cable asking for a big credit, we thought it was about time to act. Told you all in confidence, eh?"

"Yes. In confidence."

# PERPLEXITIES.

— By —
HENRY E. DUDENEY.

### 805.—ARCHERY.



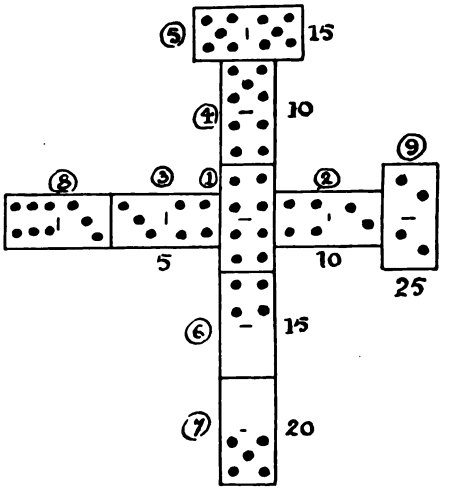

THIS is a little puzzle by the late Sam Loyd that he sent me many years ago. The numbers on the target indicate the scores for the successive rings. A lady archer carried off the first prize by scoring exactly 100 points. Can you discover what is the smallest number of arrows that she must have used to accomplish the feat?

### 806.—DIGITS AND SQUARES.

THERE is a very early puzzle of mine, to find those four-figure square numbers, such as 3025, that have the peculiarity that if we add together the two halves (30 and 25) we get the square root. (I.) A correspondent now suggests that we find a number such that its first and last digits multiplied together give its square root. Thus, in the case of 169, $9 \times 1 = 9$, and not 13, so it will not do. Can you find a correct solution? As this is very easy I will give another puzzle that is quite new. (II.) Find all those five-figure squares such that the number formed by the first two figures added to that formed by the last two figures shall equal a cube. Thus, with the square of 141, which is 19881, if we add 19 and 81 together we get 100, which is a square, but unfortunately not a cube. How many solutions are there altogether?

### 807.—DOMINO SOLITAIRE.

IN an article, "Puzzles from Games," that I wrote for THE STRAND MAGAZINE for March–April, 1908, I




gave the game of Dominoes known as Solitaire Muggins, concerning which we awarded a prize in a *Tit-Bits* competition in 1897 for the highest received score of 195. I (in 1908) showed that we had kept the correct answer up our sleeve and that 200 was really possible. At the earlier date I received from America a variation of this Solitaire game in which the player is allowed the privilege of matching the first double played (and *only* the first) on the ends after matching it on the sides, as will be made clear from the illustration. The numbers encircled show the order of play and the other numbers indicate the score made by the dominoes against which they are placed. You score whenever the numbers at the ends will together sum to 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, or 35. Of course you must play one against one, two against two, as in the ordinary game, and a double, say 6–6, at the end counts 12, not 6; but the play will be quite clear from the example given, where the nine dominoes played already score 100. What is the highest amount you can score with the complete twenty-eight dominoes?

### 808.—HORSES AND BULLOCKS.

A DEALER bought a number of horses at £17 4s. each and a number of bullocks at £13 5s. each. He then discovered that the horses had cost him in all 33s. more than the bullocks. Now what is the smallest number of each that he must have bought?

## Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

### 800.—WAYS OF VOTING.

FOR each of the three clauses there are three ways of proceeding—we can vote either for, against, or not at all. For each of the three ways of voting for Clause I. there are three ways of voting for Clause II., consequently $3 \times 3 = 9$ ways of voting for the first two clauses. Then, as there are three ways of voting for Clause III. for every one of those nine cases, there are $3 \times 9 = 27$ ways of proceeding in all. Yet this is not the correct answer, because it includes the case where you decline to vote for any one of the Clauses. This case must be deducted because the question was "In how many different ways is it possible for a man to vote?" and not to vote at all is obviously not a way of voting. This was the little pitfall I hinted at. Of course, to vote both for and against is really not voting at all. The correct answer is 26.

### 801.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

THE answer is A RIVER.

### 802.—A DEAL IN TURKEYS.

THE man bought seventy-five turkeys at 16s. each, making £60. After retaining fifteen he sold the remaining sixty at 18s. each, making £54 as stated. He thus made a profit of 2s. each on the sixty birds he resold.

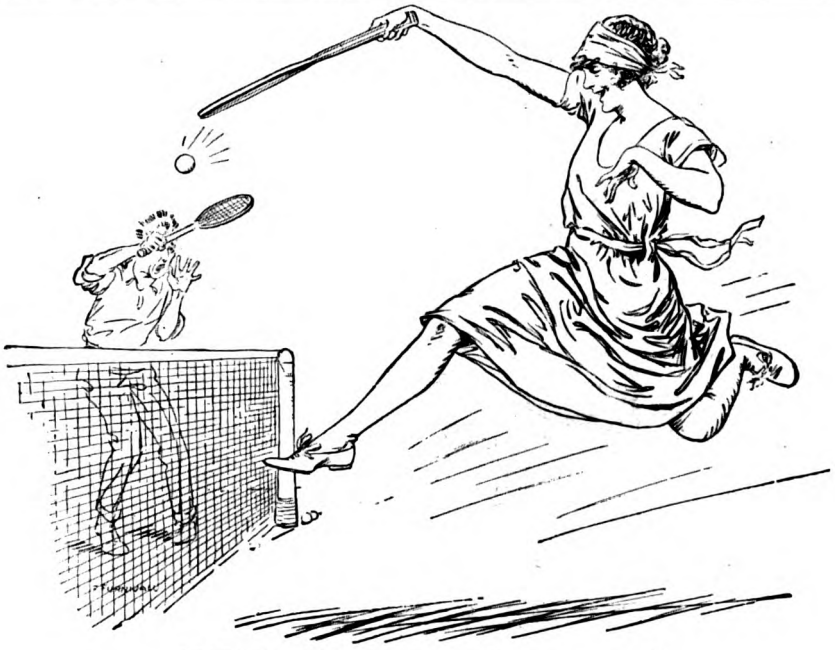
### 803.—A DIGITAL SKELETON.

AN answer that fulfils all the conditions is as follows:—

```
74 ) 603 ( 8
     592
     ---
      11
```

### 804.—CARD SHUFFLING.

To shuffle fourteen cards in the manner described so that the cards shall return to their original order requires fourteen shuffles. It is not possible for me here to go into the manner of solving. I merely wished to draw my readers' attention to the puzzle in case some of them may like to investigate.



# Well Taken !

On the tennis courts the victory is not always to the strongest, or even to the most skilful.

You cannot feel confident of winning your matches if you start handicapped by slackness and depression, if for any reason you are "out of sorts." Your eye and your hand do not then work in unison, you miss "sitters," you're tired before the game is half-way through.

Then you excuse yourself by saying, "Oh, but I was off my game."

Being "off your game" is not an accidental state which comes and goes in some mysterious, uncontrollable way. It is all a matter of the working of your inner mechanism.

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**Make pictures of the children with a**

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MISS ZENA DARE, who has recently returned to the stage to make a success in "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney," recommended in an interview that the use of Pond's Cold Cream at night should be made a regular habit.

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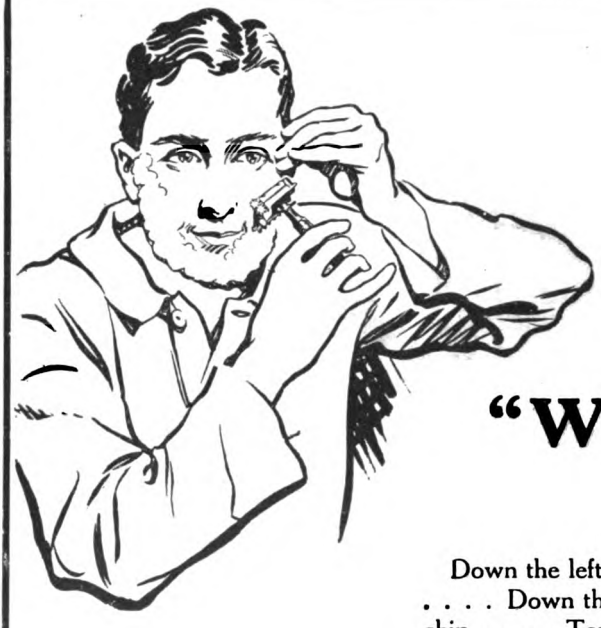
**Pond's Vanishing & Cold Creams**



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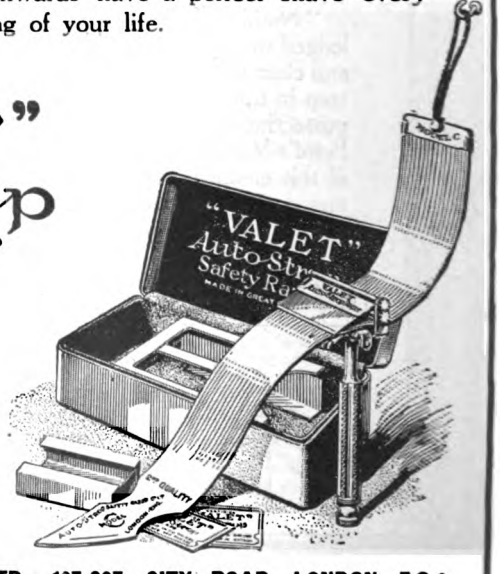


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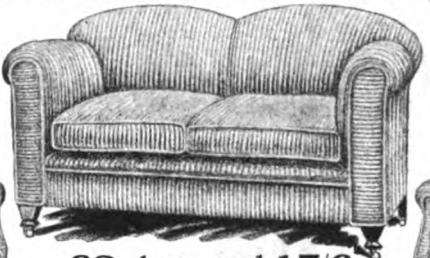

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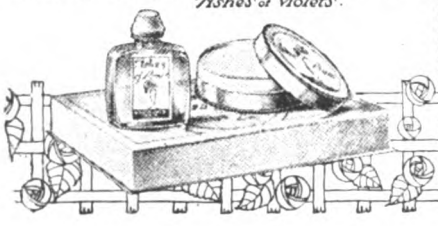

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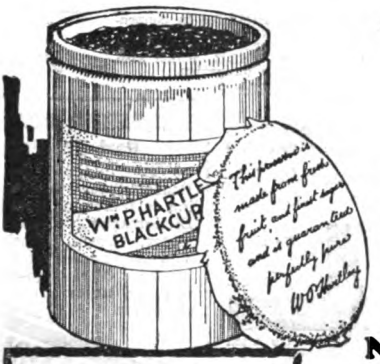


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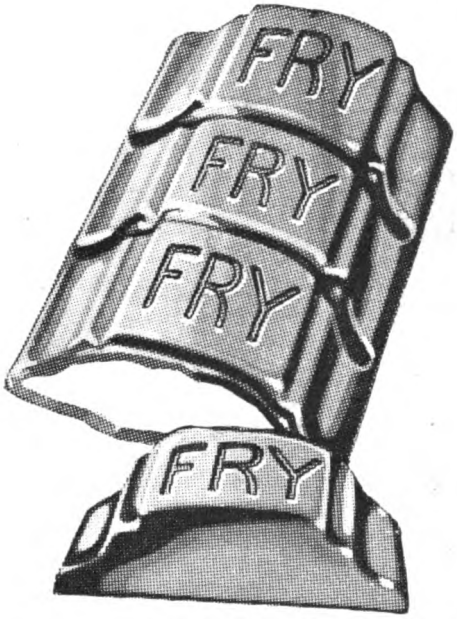


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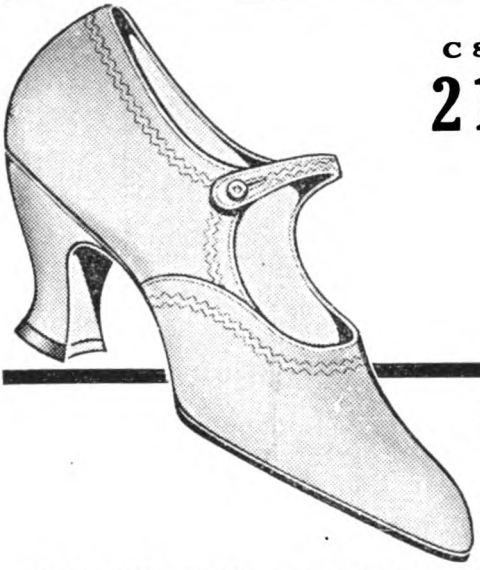

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**500 SHOPS FREEMAN, HARDY & WILLIS, Ltd., 98, Rutland Street, Leicester 500 SHOPS**

*Send a*

*And you will receive by return a complete range of patterns and styles of the famous*

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Woven on fine cambric tape in the following fast colours: Red, Black, Green, Gold, Sky and Navy Blue Lettering. They are so easily attached; just a few stitches and they're on.

12 dozen (144 names) **5/-** 6 dozen (72 names) **3/9** 3 dozen (36 names) **2/9**

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**SUN or WATER CANNOT FADE IT!**

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# IRISH DRESS LINEN
**64 EXQUISITE COLOURS**

The joy of finding a Fadeless Linen which really and truly fulfils its promise has made Hutton's Never-Fade Uncrushable Linens a tremendous success. So much so, that we are able this year to offer them at a

**REDUCED PRICE**

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**(36 ins. wide)**
**instead of 3/6**

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**A STIFF TEST.**—*"After hanging in a window for over 12 months, the colours are absolutely unaffected."* (Sgd.) A. L. C.

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M3

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**10½d. a packet. Enough for 20 helpings**

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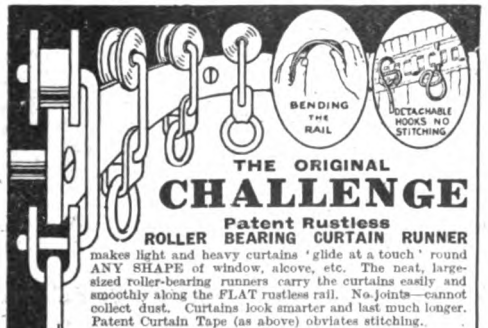


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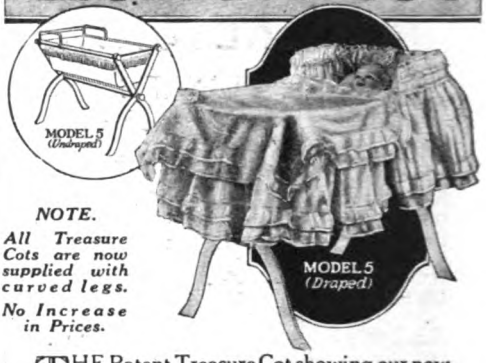


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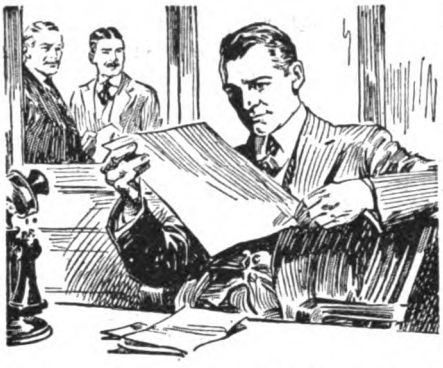

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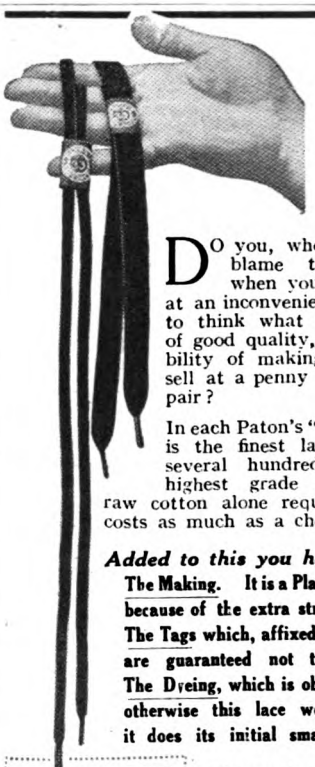

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**PATON'S "33" LACE**
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there is nothing to compare with the "Patent Canvas Shoe." Canvas uppers. Strong "Jute" soles. Black, Brown and White. Most Restful and Easy shoes for House, Holidays, and all Sports. "Ideal" for all going abroad. Mr. T. H. H. says: "*Last pair have served me 2 years and 7 months, wearing them 8 hours every day. Soles seem good enough for several years yet.*"

Full List 1d.

Mrs. C———, 7, Hackney Road, Maidstone, says: "*So comfortable for standing long hours. Cannot do without them.*"

| Prices Post free in U.K. (extra abroad). | Children's. | Ladies'. | Gents. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** Plain Shoes (without strapping) .. | 2/6 | 3/6 | 3/10 |
| **D.** Leather Fittings (as per illustration) .. | — | 4/6 | 4/9 |
| **E.** Best Blocked, no Leather Fittings .. | 3/6 | 4/11 | 5/11 |
| Superior Crepe Rubber Shoes, 1926 Keen Price | 6/11 | 8/11 | 10/11 |
| Ditto Light "Popular" | 5/6 | 6/3 | 7/9 |
| Best Leather Soled (Child's, 11 to 1, 4/11) | — | 5/11 | 7/11 |

3 pairs, 2d. per pair off; 6 pairs 3d. C.O.D. send 10/- per £ deposit and postage. *Write Direct*, no retail stores. Estab. 40 years.

**PATENT SHOE CO., Central Rd., STEPPS, near GLASGOW.**

## BRITISH-MADE SHOES

# Comfort, Durability and Style

A MAN'S footwear needs are simple compared with a woman's. He asks first for comfort—and usually sees that he gets it. Then durability—a more difficult matter. A well-known Brand such as NORVIC or MASCOT offers the best solution of this difficulty, because no manufacturer is likely to put anything but the best into goods which, in effect, he puts his signature on. You know who made them, and the NORVIC Shoe Company is in business for good. It wants your repeat orders. *Verb sap.*

MASCOT 927 in Patent Leather **25/-**

**NORVIC MASCOT**

Name of Agent and Booklet of Styles.
**NORVIC SHOE CO. - - NORWICH.**

## FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Shingle your Grey Hairs? Why not? NUCTONE will restore to them the brightness and colour of yesteryear. No danger, no embarrassment, just a gradual redevelopment of colour.

**Nuctone** for GREY HAIR

From Hairdressers, Chemists and Stores.
3/9 and 6/6 per bottle; postage 6d. extra.

**J. STEWART, Ltd., 80, New Bond St., London, W.1**

## 'SOL' PERAMS.

*BEST LONDON STYLES.*

GUARANTEED PERFECT, ARTISTIC & DURABLE.

INSIST UPON SEEING THE SOL TRADE MARK

CONVEX SIDES AND ALL LATEST IMPROVEMENTS.

Purchased in A.D. 1883 by Queen Victoria.
Awarded 4 Prize Medals.

Carried on the PATENT **SOL-NO-JAR**

The "ETRUSCAN" **£10 : 10 : 9**
*(Patented and Registered)*
Other 'Sol' Perams from **£4 : 10 : 0**
OF ALL PERAMBULATOR DEALERS.

A Good Selection shown by THE ARMY AND NAVY STORES, WHITELEY'S, SELFRIDGE'S, JOHN BARKER'S, MAPLES, Etc.
Wholesale Manufacturers: SIMMONS & CO., LONDON, S.E.1

# Every Woman
SEES A HOME THROUGH HER
## ENGAGEMENT RING

**WE HAVE** the choicest selection of rings in London. Finest Quality Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platinum Mounts They are sold for Cash only, at prices which defy competition Select one of the **10,000** Rings we hold in stock, and put the cash saved towards the home

WE GIVE BEST PRICES FOR OLD GOLD. DIAMONDS PEARLS ETC

*Send for Ring Catalogue*

£5·0·0 to £50·0·0
According to size of Diamonds

**BRAVINGTONS** LTD

**KINGS CROSS, N.I.** OPEN UNTIL 9 P.M. ON SATURDAY
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**71, LUDGATE HILL EC4.** OPEN UNTIL 7 P.M. ON THURSDAY
OPEN UNTIL 1 P.M. ON SATURDAY. A. K. Co., Ltd.

**Grand Stuff for Nerves**

He wouldn't be without LECTONA for anything! A few weeks ago he lost grip on his work, sleep eluded him, and he became irritable and depressed—in short, was a bundle of nerves. A short course of LECTONA quickly put him right, and now he feels fit for anything.

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Mind and body derive immediate benefit from LECTONA because it contains *Lecithin*—the vital food of the nerves. No other preparation is so effective in restoring run-down nerves and bringing back lost health and vigour. Prove LECTONA in your case.

*In tins 3/- & 5/6, through Chemists, or POST FREE from*

**LECITHIN LTD. (Dept. S), Rickmansworth Road, Watford, Herts.**

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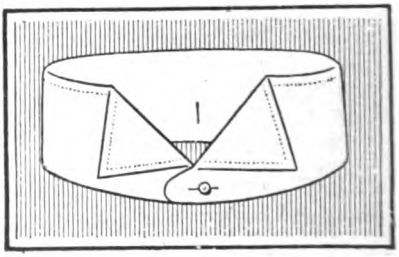
## *CASTLE COLLARS*



B. 47. The newest collar for dress or town wear. Smartly cut with peaks in perfect alignment. Depth 2 in. Stocked in quarter sizes from 14-17½ in. All latest shapes. Per dozen - - **12/-**

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*A Sample Collar sent post free for 1/-, together with latest list No. 36L of other Castle Collar shapes.*

**ROBINSON & CLEAVER**
*Irish Linen Manufacturers* **BELFAST** *The Home of Irish Linen*

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## *and its uses—*

Lux makes a most invigorating shampoo and gives the hair a lovely gloss. Whip up a lather in hot water, cool till bearable, then cover the head in the rich foam. Rinse until the hair is quite free of lather, wrap the head in a turkish towel and dry in the usual way.

Silk and artificial silk stockings should be washed after every wearing. Squeeze the cooled Lux lather gently through them, rinse in clean tepid water, and dry not too near the heat. This way they last longer.

Use Lux for everything you wash yourself. Lux is the supreme cleanser to which you can trust every delicate material. Airy georgettes and chiffons, filmy laces, fine lawns and linens, silks and satins, woollens of course, washable artificial silks and other newly invented materials all come from the rich foam without a thread harmed.

***Buy the big 9d packet for convenience and economy***

LX 432-62 LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED, PORT SUNLIGHT

*J. D. C. MACKAY, Principal, The School of Accountancy.*

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Thanks to my advice many thousands of men who were occupying routine positions with no "future," are now established in well-paid responsible posts with first-class prospects open before them.

These men took the Direct Way to Success—through School of Accountancy specialised postal training. Some qualified for such highly-paid posts as Director, Works Manager, Accountant, Auditor, Company Secretary, Office Manager; others sat for and passed such universally recognised professional examinations as—

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*Corporation of Accountants*
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In every case these men have definitely improved their status and increased their salaries by anything up to 400%.

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What these men have done I can help you to do. Translate your ambitions into realities! Write to me personally at the London Office, giving (1) your age, (2) your general education, and (3) your business experience, and I will map out for you, free, a plan of campaign which will take you step by step from your present rank to the position you seek. Write to-day and mark your letter "Principal."

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*Secretaryship — Banking — Insurance*

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## The Miraculous Quick Shave with NO SOAP or BRUSH

***THE COLONEL:*** "I am travelling abroad next week, and I am taking a 'blessing' back with me."

***THE TRAVELLER:*** "What is it, old man?"

***THE COLONEL:*** "Why, a most important thing—something that will give me an easy and perfect shave. It is SHAVEX, and with it there is no misery of lathering until my face is sore, for it requires no soap or brush. I just smear a little SHAVEX over my beard, and then shave in a quarter of the time. I always get a close and clean shave and my skin feels as soft as satin. I had a lot of wrinkles, but they have disappeared, through the use of SHAVEX, because it is a Skin Food as well as a Shaving Cream, and there is no need to use any lotions. That is the 'blessing' I am taking with me, old friend."

***THE TRAVELLER:*** "Why, old man, you certainly look younger! I have recently been travelling in East Africa and I wish I had had a few tubes with me. It would have been a godsend."

***THE DOCTOR:*** "I am one doctor among many thousands who recommend SHAVEX. There would be no rash or pimples, etc., if all men used SHAVEX because it is antiseptic. SHAVEX is the one perfect and healthy method of shaving."

# SHAVEX

**Large Tube 1/-** **LARGER TUBE OR POT** (Double quantity) Postage to the Colonies 6d. extra. **1/6**

Obtainable at all chemists, or direct from
The ZEE-KOL Manfg. Co. (Dept. V.52),
40, Blenheim Road, Upper Holloway, London, N.19.

## SEND THIS COUPON FOR FREE SAMPLE

Cut this Coupon out; attach it to a piece of paper on which your name and address is written plainly and send with 2d. stamp to cover postage to—

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*Masters the Hair!*

1/6 & 2/6 PER BOTTLE FROM CHEMISTS HAIRDRESSERS AND STORES

# ANZORA

Anzora Perfumery Co., Ltd., Willesden Lane, N.W.6

You can't *possibly* get wet in the

19 oz. "Mattamac" REG'D. 19 oz.

29/6 29/6

World-Famous Featherweight STORMPROOF

"MATTAMAC" AGENCIES EVERYWHERE WITH AMPLE STOCKS.

A "Mattamac" is identical in appearance with the usual five-guinea Weatherproof. In utility, also, it equals its much-more-costly competitor. It wears as long, weighs one third, and is **ABSOLUTELY WATERPROOF.**

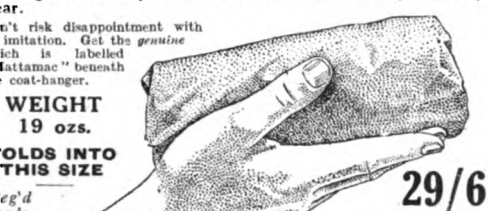
Though light and compact-folding, the "Mattamac" is Wind and Chill proof as well as Wet proof. It is the *ideal* general-utility Coat for week-end and going-away wear.

Don't risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the *genuine* which is labelled "Mattamac" beneath the coat-hanger.

WEIGHT 19 ozs.

FOLDS INTO THIS SIZE

(*Reg'd Trade Mark.*)



29/6

*For Ladies and Men.*

"Matta" Fabric is exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 6 ft. man beneath, when folded, just made this handful. *This is drawn from an actual photo of his hand and the "Mattamac" he wears, folded to fit snugly into his jacket pocket.*

19 OUNCES WEIGHT 29/6

*Colours:*

FAWN, OLIVE, GREY, NIGGER, SILVER, POWDER BLUE, BRICK, LEAF GREEN, COPPER, PASTEL, TAWNY, BOTTLE, RUSSET, NAVY and BLACK.

***Unbelted Models*** (19 oz.) **29/6**

***Belted*** (21¼ oz.) **32/6**

*Made also for Children at size prices*

*Direct Drawings from photos of Stock "Mattamac" Stormproofs*

## *The new "Dragon-fly" (Reg'd) Ladies' "Mattamac"*

This newest Ladies' Coat combines all those features which have made "Mattamac" Stormproofs world-famous, with the appearance, touch and wear of *real* Silk, at less than the price of the Silk "Mattamac."

"GLOSSAMER" (Regd.) MATTA FABRIC, from which it is entirely made, consists of a warp of the original MATTA FABRIC and a weft of the finest spun Artificial Silk. It is a perfect combination of lightness, strength, utter waterproofness and colour beauty. It wears with an endurance amazing for its fineness and lightness.

We have called this new "Mattamac" the "Dragon-fly" because its iridescent surface recalls the shimmering, glistening wing of a gorgeous "Dragon Fly." Following the usual "Mattamac" policy of conscientious make and extended test, it is offered as a garment of service and distinctiveness. It will keep you dry, *thoroughly dry*, as well as please you by its characterful look, its lengthy wear, and its dazzling "shot" colour effect.

**UNBELTED MODEL (18 oz.) 45/6**

**BELTED MODEL (20 oz.) ... 49/6**

*Supplied in 7 "shot" colourings as follows:—Blue & Gold, Brick & Green, Purple & Emerald, Green & Blue, Red & Green, Royal & Gold, and Red & Gold.*

**To order: Send height and chest measure (over Dress) and remittance, to Pearson Bros., the Sole Makers, stating colours needed, and you will be supplied direct on 7 days' free approval. You can, if you prefer, write for "Folder D.F. 26 Z" illustrating the Coat, and embodying Order Form with seven actual colour patterns.**

**AGENCIES EVERYWHERE WITH AMPLE STOCKS.**

## MADE IN 11 MODELS, 15 SHADES & 40 SIZES

Town and Country Unbelted Models, **29/6**; Belted Models, **32/6**; in 15 shades and 40 sizes; also for Children at prices according to size. Made entirely from the genuine "Matta" (Regd.) Fabric, with adjustable wind-cuffs, well-made pockets, lined shoulders, Raglan sleeves, roomy "under-arms," and the famous cut of Conduit St., London, W.

## SENT ON SEVEN DAYS' FREE APPROVAL

You can satisfy yourself about a "Mattamac" Stormproof in actual wear. Each Coat is sent out on the understanding that it can be returned within seven days of receipt in exchange for the full purchase price if you wish. Send measurement around chest over waistcoat (Ladies measure over the dress), state height, colour needed, and enclose remittance. (Post free U.K.; extra abroad)

## SEND FOR "MATTAMAC" ART BOOKLET POST FREE

Send a postcard for the "Mattamac" Booklet **"26Z"** and actual colour patterns of "Matta" Fabric. This Booklet illustrates Town and Country Models for Adults, and Models for Children of all ages at prices according to size. "Mattamac" Stormproofs are *only* obtainable from the "Mattamac" Showrooms and Branches, from our accredited Provincial Agents, and through the post from the Conduit Street Headquarters. If unable personally to inspect models, send order with remittance, or write for the "Mattamac" Booklet **"26Z"** to Pearson Bros.:

PEARSON BROTHERS **45** (Kingston House) **CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W.1**

FOUR "MATTAMAC" LONDON BRANCHES:
20, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. (10 doors from St. Paul's Cathedral);
117, Oxford Street, London, W. (Opposite Bourne & Hollingsworth's);
157, Fenchurch Street, London, E.C. (2 doors from Lime Street);
129a, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W. (2 doors from Ashley Place).

*Midland Showrooms:*—134 NEW STREET (next door to the High School), BIRMINGHAM

# Walk the Barratt Way

A lady never looks more attractive than when walking the Barratt Way—natural, easy, light and graceful. You can walk this way, too, if you give your feet the help of Barratts' scientifically-designed shoes. They look well at all times—when you are sitting or standing —and especially when you are walking.

*Style 4331.*

**16/9**

**POST FREE.**

Sizes stocked: 2, 2½, 3, 3½, 4, 4½, 5, 5½, 6, 6½, 7. Each size in 4 (medium) and 5 (wide) widths.

## Write for this Fashionable Patent Walking Shoe

Open strapwork front and twin bar, beautifully cut and finished. High-grade materials throughout. Smart, easy toe shape, elegant Louis heel, perfect instep and ankle fitting. Lined stainless leather. Prime, solid leather close-edged sole and solid leather insole. Dainty, distinctive and durable.

**Secure Your Pair by Post To-day.** Satisfaction or money back guaranteed. Please send size and width wanted. Or send pencil outline of stockinged foot. We guarantee perfect fitting. State Style 4331 and enclose 16/9 cheque or money order.

**Cash on Delivery. Overseas:** 10/- deposit required with C.O.D. orders. Postage extra. Mailing weight of Style 4331, 1 lb. 12 ozs.

**W. BARRATT & CO., LTD. 20, Footshape Works, Northampton.**

Write for Superb Catalogue of Footshape Footwear Enclose Threepence Postage

# HURCULACES

## No. 40 FOR 4d. (pair)

## Lucky for Boots

**No. 40 for 4d.** pair, is a lace of Silk Finish, extra strength, made in all styles for Ladies' and Men's Boots and Shoes, ordinary or invisible eyelets.

OTHER QUALITIES:

**No. 30 for 3d.** pair, Extra Super Glace Yarn.
**No. 10 for 2d.** pair, Strong Glace Yarn.

If any difficulty in obtaining Hurculaces send direct to us for a pair and we will give you the name of nearest Retailer who supplies Hurculaces.

*Manufactured by:*
*FAIRE BROS. & Co. Ltd., LEICESTER*

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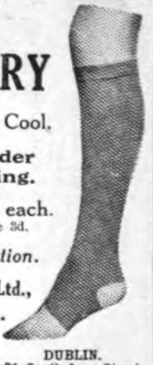

Seamless, Reversible, Soft and Cool.

**Almost imperceptible under any Ordinary Silk Stocking.**

Made in Flesh Colour. **12/6** each. Postage 3d.

*Self-Measurement Form on application.*

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**will make all the difference to your comfort in writing.** Specially designed to secure smooth, easy penmanship, it successfully eliminates all tendency to scratch or dig into the paper. In non-corrosive silver-white metal—the most delightful pen made. Try a 6d. box of twelve, of all stationers or from—

PERRY & Co LTD 49 Old Bailey, London E.C.4.

# PERRY TESTED PENS

# Exclusive Lingerie Designs in Tricot, Milanese & Satin

**YOUR GUARANTEE.**
*Never accept any garment without the 'Celanese' woven Brand Tab stitched inside.*

Garment No. 3534.

IN 'Celanese' Tricot, the new *washable* Satin, and lovely Milanese (*Ladderproof*), a positive riot of new season's designs is now at your disposal. Each dainty garment comes in many flattering styles, and every style has ample fittings. They are cut and finished by our own experts, and every stitch is guaranteed. They wear extremely well and can be washed repeatedly without loss of softness or lustre. Visit your draper to-day.

## 'Celanese' UNDERWEAR

*In case of difficulty in obtaining these new productions, write to us for name and address of your nearest supplier.*

*Sole Manufacturers—*
**BRITISH CELANESE LTD., LONDON, S.W.1.**

# DUROBELLE FABRICS *for* HEALTH-LOVING HOMES

Your home can't be healthy if you shut out any of the sunshine, yet while curtains and coverings fade the temptation to protect them—to draw the blinds and save the fragile colours—is always too strong.

Fadeless Durobelle Fabrics are temptation's surest safeguard. Their lovely colours need no protection from the summer sun—they will not, cannot fade. Where curtains and coverings are made of Durobelle the healthy sun can stream in the whole season through.

## *SEND for* POST FREE PATTERNS

**and ensure health the Summer through for YOUR Home.**

**Plain Casement Cloths,** in various colours. 31 and 50 ins. wide, from **1/0½** to **1/9½** per yard.

**Fine Silky Casement Cloths,** 50 ins. wide. Creams and colours, from **2/3½** to **3/3½** per yard.

**Bolton Sheeting.** 15 beautiful colours. 50 ins wide, **2/11½** to **4/3½** per yard.

**Art. Silk Taffetas and Damasks,** plain, shot, striped and patterned effects. Wide range of exquisite rich colourings, all 50 ins. wide, prices from **6/6** to **16/6** per yard.

**Fine Soft Reps,** 31 and 50 ins. wide. Cream and colours, from **1/6½** to **2/11½** per yard.

**Satin Stripe Reversible Casements,** in great variety of colours. 48 ins. wide, **3/11½** per yard.

**Cotton Satins and Damasks,** plain and in charming designs. Beautiful colours, 50 ins. wide, from **3/11½** to **10/9** per yard.

**Chenilles and Velours,** rich soft draperies, many lovely colours, 50 ins. wide, from **6/11** to **16/9** per yard.

ALLEN'S FADELESS Durobelle

*New and greatly enlarged London showrooms are now open at 32, Sloane Street, S.W., where there is a magnificent display of furnishing fabrics of all kinds, carpets, furniture, household linens, etc., etc.*

J. ALLEN **Dept. A, BOURNEMOUTH**

**London: 32, Sloane St., S.W.** *All letters to Bournemouth.*

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## ARE INNUMERABLE
## IF YOU RIDE AN
## E. W. MODEL
# Douglas

THE rush, the crush, and the uncertainty of travelling by train has spoilt many a perfect holiday, for instead of returning home happy and contented people often arrive "dead beat" and bad tempered.

To the hundred thousand happy riders of DOUGLAS Motor Cycles, holidays are *real* holidays from the time they start out to the time they arrive home again. Their time is their own and they can go anywhere at any time without a care for such things as time-tables and railways.

No other machine in the world can give such perfect reliability as the new E. W. DOUGLAS. Just notice the refinements, such as enclosed valve gear, flywheel clutch, roller bearings to the head and wheels, and the wonderful low pressure braking system. It is a mount to delight the eye of any man and is so simple to ride and maintain that a schoolgirl can master it in half an hour.

**Let us solve your holiday problem the DOUGLAS way.**

*Send for a Free 38-page "Book of the E.W."*

**DOUGLAS MOTORS, LTD., KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL.**

By Appointment

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*World-Renowned*
## LAWN MOWERS AND ROLLERS

Since their establishment in 1835, Green's have been the pioneers of all that is best in Lawn Mowers, Rollers, etc. The "Silens Messor" is very light running, practically noiseless, and gives a fine, even surface. Its reversible Cylinder has 8 cutters, adjustable to any cut. We supply Hand Rollers, with machine-turned rolling surface, for Bowling Greens and Hard Tennis Courts.

*GREEN'S secured the highest award of the Royal Horticultural Society at the Regent's Park Motor Mower Trials.*

Note the Model de Luxe "SILENS MESSOR" Hand Lawn Mower, fitted with Ball Bearings, etc.

Obtainable from Ironmongers, Stores, etc.

*Complete Illustrated List No. 37 on application.*

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PLAYER'S MEDIUM NAVY CUT CIGARETTES, WITH OR WITHOUT CORK TIPS

*Daddy's Favourite.*

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## NAVY CUT

## Tobacco & Cigarettes

PLAYER'S NAVY CUT.

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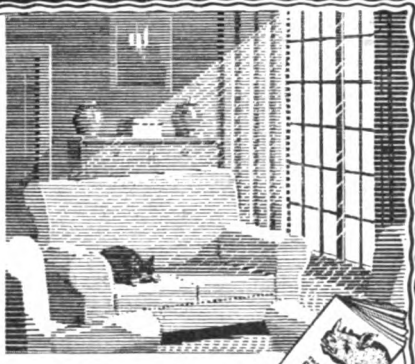
RE-COVER WITH RHINOS



Good Leather—
*Better Leather—*
# *RHINOS!*

Leather cracks, Rhinos won't. Leather stains, Rhinos doesn't. Leather is not waterproof, Rhinos is.

Rhinos is leather reconstructed. It has the good qualities of hide and others of its own. Rhinos is infinitely superior to "leather cloths"; it is ideal for recovering armchairs, settees and cushions.

At quite small cost you can have your upholstery recovered smartly and luxuriously in Rhinos—and your friends will admire your good taste.

Rhinos is worth inquiring into? Then send the coupon for "The Book of Rhinos" and a selection of patterns.

RHINOS

Send me 'The Book of Rhinos' and a full range of patterns. I should like to test this new covering material.

*Name*_____

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RHINOS LTD., 474, TRADING ESTATE, SLOUGH, BUCKS.

## *The "Grove-nor" Cut*
***Improved Tailoring by Post***

Guarantees perfect fitting. British pure wool Lounge or Sports Suits from **63/-.** Highest price **7 Guineas.** Satisfaction or money back.

***Write for sumptuous catalogue and 100 cloth patterns post free.***

**GROVES & LINDLEY,**
**114, The Lion,**
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## A Home Modelling Outfit

**4/9 & 6/9**
*Post Free*

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*Full Lists of Plasticine and NOVLART free.*

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**3, Bathampton, Bath**

## EDISON BELL HANDEPHON

**Britain's Best Portable**
**Model 87C - - -**
**Price - - £4 : 15 : 0**

Plays All Types of Gramophone Record

The HANDEPHON is entirely British made—motor, tone-arm, sound-box, cabinet and every other part. Thus satisfaction is absolutely guaranteed. The model is the acme of portability and compactness. When closed, looks no bigger than an attache case.

*Space provided to carry 12 ten-inch records.*

Weight - - - - - 13 lbs. 10 ozs.

**IDEAL FOR HOME AND HOLIDAY USE**

*The "Morning Post" says:* "The Edison Bell 'Handephon' is an exceedingly compact little machine that takes a full-size record. Its compactness has not been allowed to stand in the way of efficiency in any particular. It secured first place in an open competition held by 'The Gramophone' recently, and it was selected to accompany the Court-Treatt Cape to Cairo Expedition."

*Manufactured at:*
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*Use Chromic Needles on All Your Records.*

*Friday night is Amami night*

6d EACH COMPLETE

Forty-seven ingredients and the Lemon Juice Rinsing Powder make this fragrant Shampoo the most luxurious you can buy.

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## SYSTEM WHICH PUTS FIGHT IN YOUR THOUGHT.

IS man a thinking animal? He is supposed to be. His Latin name is *Homo sapiens*. Yet when one observes the senseless way in which so many people behave, one sometimes doubts. The trouble is that although Man has been endowed with the power of Thought, he does not use that power sufficiently. And when a thing is insufficiently used it becomes weak instead of strong. Scientists tell us that the average person only uses about 50 per cent. of his brain. What is worse, he doesn't use even that 50 per cent. vigorously enough. *There is no vigour in his thinking: there is no fight in his thought.* He takes too many of his opinions ready-made, and falls with undue ease into the rut of routine.

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| Depression | Shyness |
| Moodiness | Timidity |
| Melancholy | Irritability |
| Forgetfulness | Fears |
| Indecision | Lost Nerve |
| Boredom | Weakness of Will |

and of developing in place of these worries and weaknesses such fine and positive qualities as—

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|---|---|
| **—Concentration** | **—Organising Power** |
| **—Observation** | **—Self-Confidence** |
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| **—A Reliable Memory** | **—Creative Force** |

which will be of the utmost value to you in all the affairs of the world, and will enable you to take up a confident, brave, and happy outlook on life.

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**Will you please send**

# A GIFT

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STRAND MAG./June, 1923.

**MONEY-MAKING HOBBY**

# CASH PRIZES FOR SONG VERSES.

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*MR. RALPH STANLEY, the famous writer of "Shufflin' Along," "Idaho," "Bystander," Birthday Songs and over 200 other popular songs, whose advice and guidance in the simple art of money-making by song writing is offered to all readers.*

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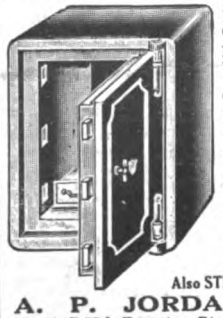

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**Give your feet that "Kruschen Feeling."** 111

**1/6** *Half pound Pink Pkt.*

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FOR SERVICE
WITHOUT
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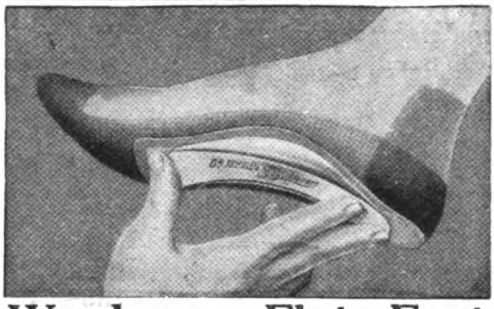

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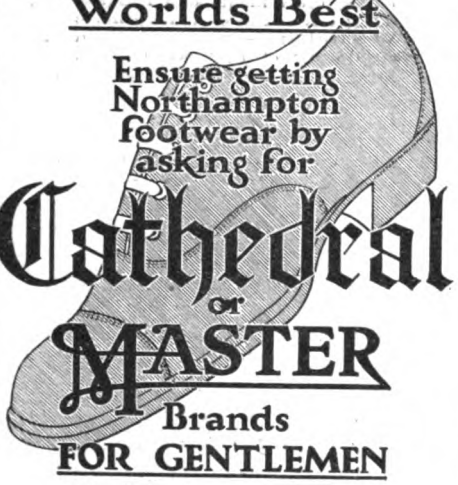

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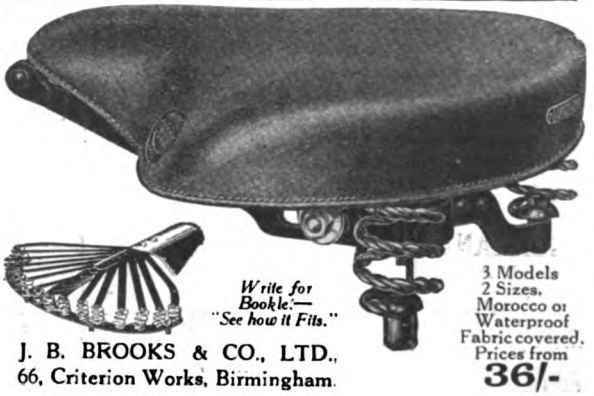

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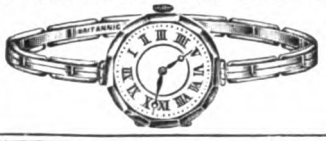


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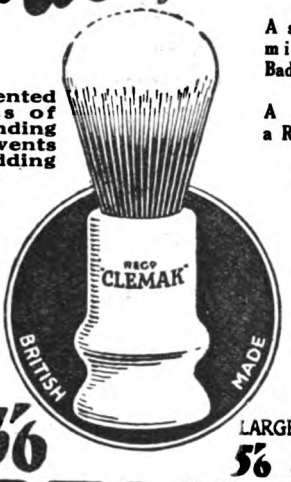


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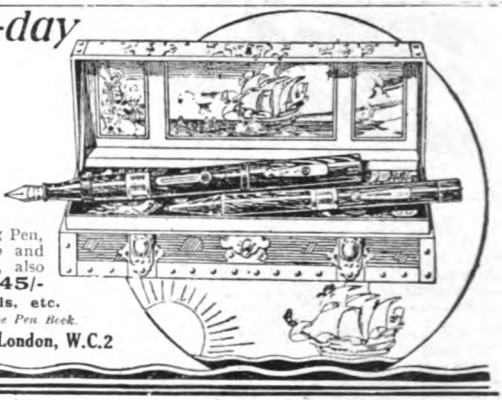

The Chest shown contains a Mottled Waterman's Self-Filling Pen, with 9-ct. broad gold band, 18-ct. Gold-filled Clip-Cap and Gilt Box Lever, and a Waterman's Rigid Point Pencil, also with broad 9-ct. gold band to match. **Price 45/-**

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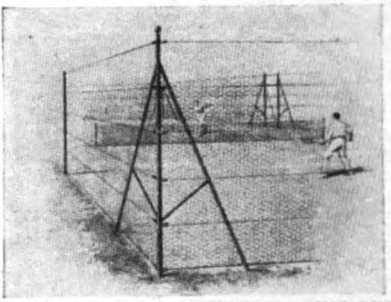

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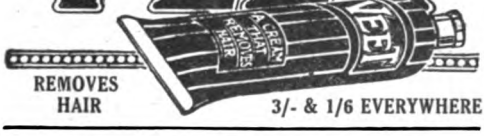
VEET

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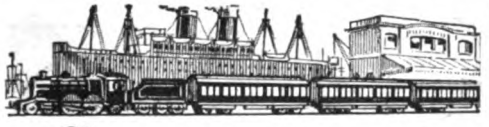

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"As evidence of this I may mention that on more than one occasion when we have been visited by one of our French business friends (the majority of whom have very little useful English), and I happen to have been absent, they have asked *whether our French correspondent could not act as interpreter*, and when they have been informed that we do not employ a Frenchman to conduct our French correspondence, they have replied:

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"The Major"

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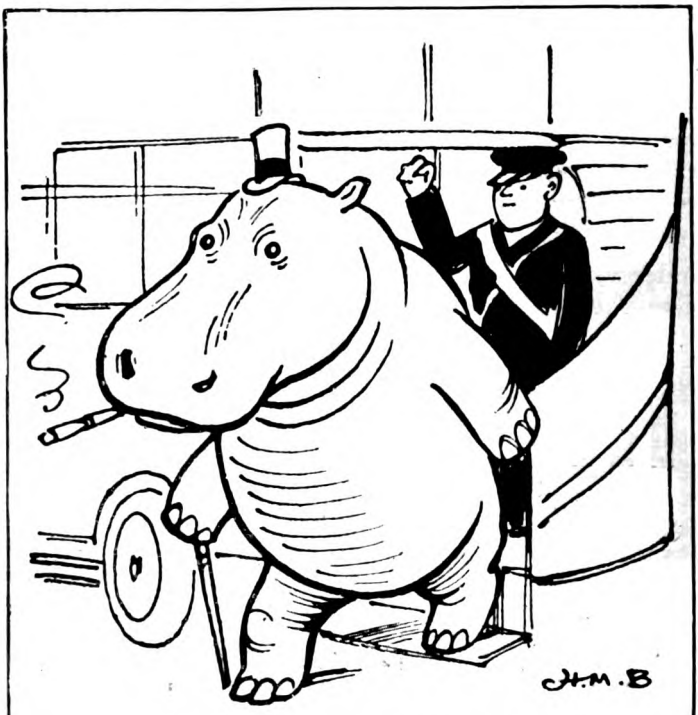
*To face end of Text.*

# Books to Buy

*Showing a native girl a portrait of one of her companions.*

## A PRIMITIVE ARCADIA.
By ELLIS SILAS.
(*T. Fisher Unwin.* 15/-)

Those who have become a little weary of the average book of South Seas travel will thank Mr. Ellis Silas, the well-known artist, for this refreshingly unconventional volume. His Arcadia is Papua, or, rather, a group of coral atolls called the Trobriand Isles, where he lived and worked for three years, finding endless subjects for his brush in "this world of realized dreams." Particularly amusing are his stories of his attempts to persuade the native girls to sit as models. The gay colours on his palette had an irresistible fascination for them, and each one on arrival would make straight for it and the one mirror he possessed and proceed to indulge in an orgy of making-up!




*He thought he saw a banker's clerk*
*Descending from a bus;*
*He looked again and found it was*
*A hippopotamus.*
*"If this should stay to dine," he said,*
*"There won't be much for us."*

## NONSENSE VERSES. AN ANTHOLOGY.
By LANGFORD REED.
(*Jarrolds.* 7/6.)

It was a happy idea of Mr. Langford Reed's to compile this anthology, as there are few who will deny that

"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men."

His selection on the whole is a commendable one, even though one would like to have had further examples of Edward Lear. However, he includes some of the best of Lewis Carroll, G. K. Chesterton, Oliver Herford, Hilaire Belloc, A. A. Milne, etc., and is fortunate in having H. M. Bateman as his illustrator. It is difficult to think of any other artist who could have entered so thoroughly into the spirit of the book.

I went to borrow cheese next door,
And saw my likeness in the floor;
Oh, what a joy to see myself
Without that scramble to the shelf
To reach the looking glass. My face
Will have no whiskers out of place
While the wise folk who live next door
Use Mansion Polish for the floor.

# MANSION POLISH

**quickly gives a beautifully bright finish to Floors and Furniture.**
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See the name 'Cadbury' on every piece of chocolate.

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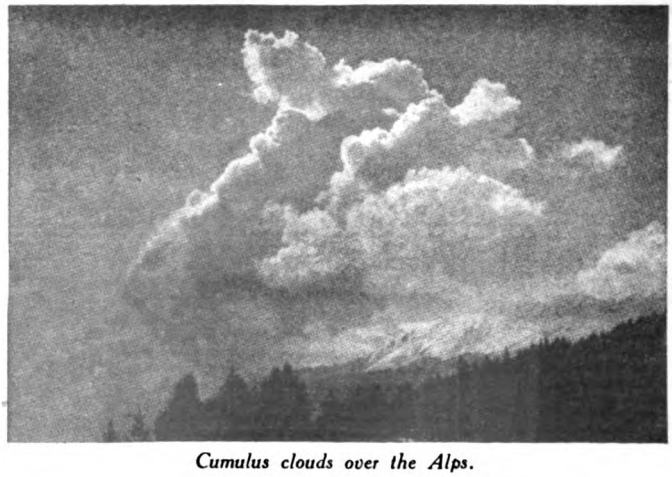
## CLOUDS AND WEATHER PHENOMENA.

By C. J. P. CAVE.

(*Cambridge University Press.* 5/-)

Although intended primarily for artists—whose landscapes, we are told, are often spoilt by "impossible" clouds—this little volume will make a strong appeal to all who would add to their knowledge of clouds, rainbows, halos, mirages, etc. Mr. Cave writes with a welcome absence of technical terms, and makes his meaning still more clear by the reproduction of nearly fifty excellent photographs of cloud structure. Indeed, the beauty of some of these cloud-pictures will be a revelation to many readers.

*Captain Marryat's Phantom Ship.*



*Cumulus clouds over the Alps.*

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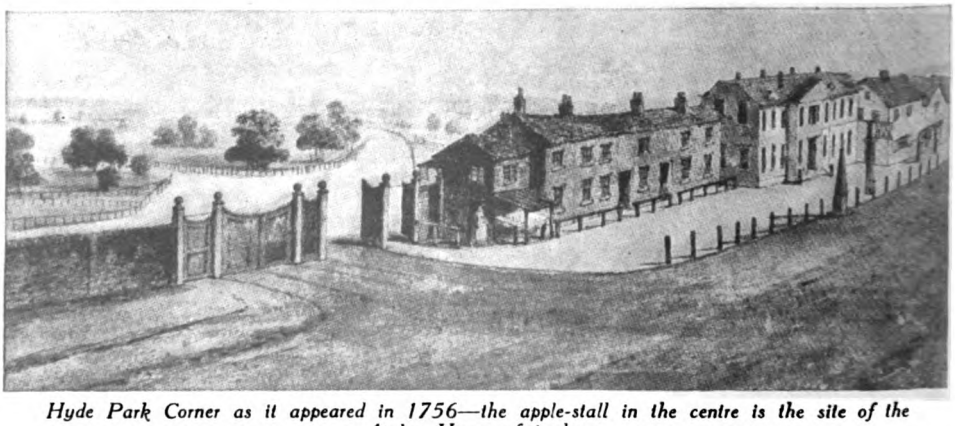

*Hyde Park Corner as it appeared in 1756—the apple-stall in the centre is the site of the Apsley House of to-day.*

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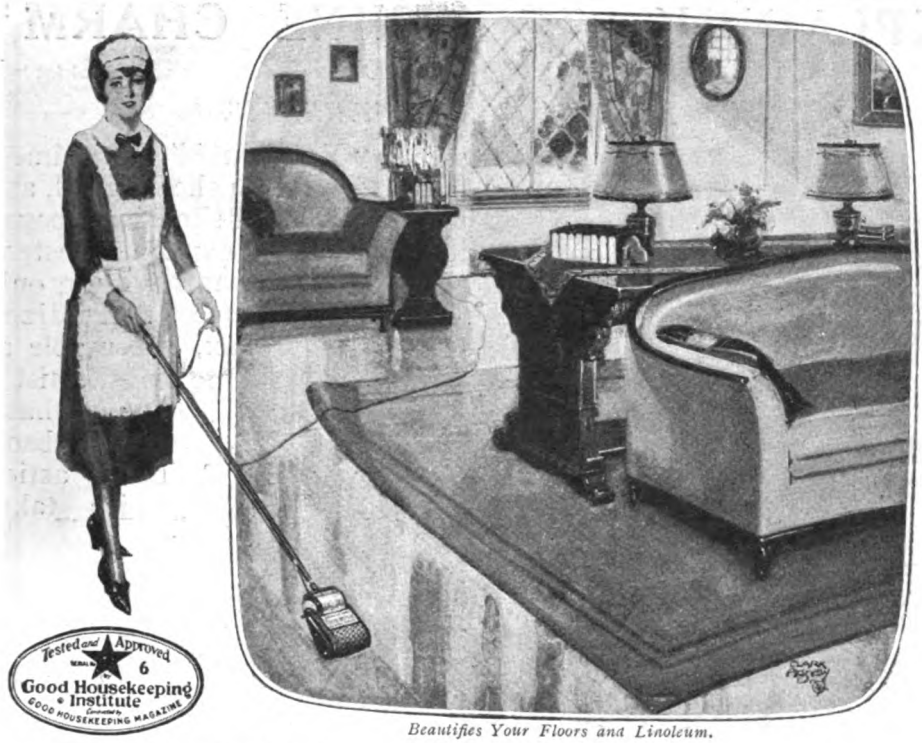
(*The Architectural Press.* 42/-)

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*Illustrated by PENRHYN STANLAWS.*

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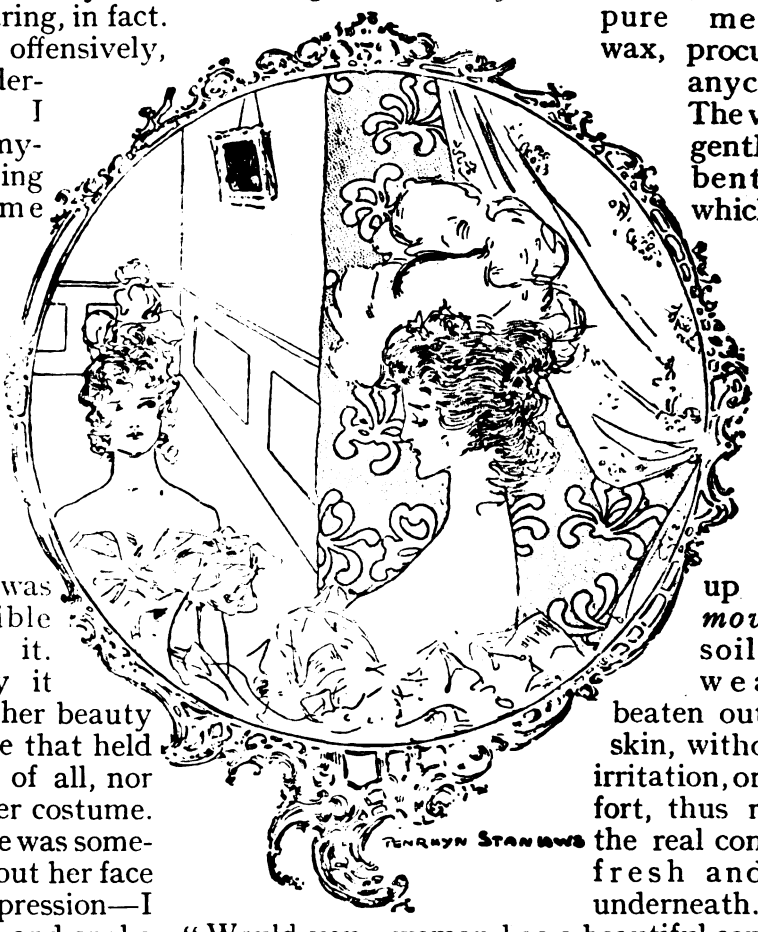

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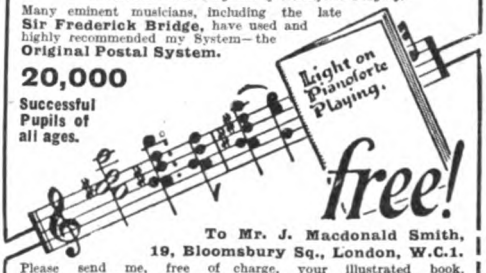


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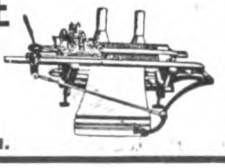

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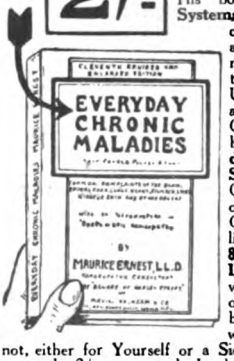


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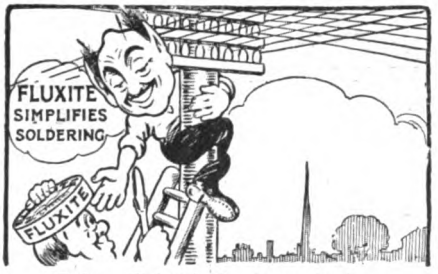


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# Index to "Strand Magazine" Advertisements.


PAGE

**Baby Carriages, Cots, Rugs, Etc.**
Simmons & Co. (Sol Peram) .. 25
Tan-Sad Prams .. .. .. 38
Treasure Cot .. .. .. 18

**Bath Cabinets, Etc.**
Foot, J., & Son, Ltd. .. .. 54

**Boots, Shoes, Etc.**
Abbott, W., & Sons, Ltd. .. 67
Barratt, W., & Co., Ltd... .. 30
Cathedral Shoes (Arnold Bros.) .. 43
Cherry Blossom Boot Polish .. 63
Freeman, Hardy & Willis .. 14
Hood Tennis Shoes .. .. 40
Hurculaces .. .. .. 30
Norvic and Mascot Shoes .. 25
Norwell's Perth Footwear .. 44
Oral Footwear .. .. .. 22
Patent Canvas Shoe .. .. 24
Paton's Laces .. .. .. 24

**Bungalows, Houses, Estates, Etc.**
South Western Appliance Co. .. 40
Kinmel Bay .. .. Inset

**Camping Outfits, Tents, Etc.**
Lightweight Tent Co. .. .. 69
Pocock's Tents .. .. .. 48

**Charities, Etc.**
Dr. Barnardo's Homes .. .. 36

**China and Glass, Etc.**
Fenton Pottery .. .. .. 39
Rock Pottery .. .. .. 51
Windsor Porcelain Co. .. .. 36

**Churchyard Memorials.**
Malle, G., & Son, Ltd. .. .. 54

**Cigarettes, Tobacco, Pipes, Etc.**
Army Club Cigarettes .. .. 61
Orlik Pipes .. .. .. 52
Player's Tobacco and Cigarettes 33
Wills' Gold Flake.. .. .. 53

**Clocks and Watches.**
Britannic Bracelet Watch .. 50
Samuel, H., Ltd. .. .. .. 17

**Confectionery.**
Cadbury's Chocolate .. .. 63
Clarnico Caramels .. .. 16
Fry's Chocolate Cream .. .. 12
Rowntree's Chocolates .. Inset

**Costumes, Dress Materials, Etc.**
Hutton's Dress Linens .. .. 14
Otterburn Tweeds .. .. 24
Wood Bros. (Maternity Skirts) .. 50

**Cycles and Accessories.**
Ariel Cycles .. .. .. 52
Brooks' Saddles .. .. .. 45
Mead Cycles .. .. .. 23
Swift Cycles .. .. .. 46

**Dyers and Cleaners, Renovators, Etc.**
Clark's Dye Works .. Cover 3
Drummer Dyes .. .. .. 21
Whitaker's Luton Dyes .. .. 36

PAGE

**Educational.**
Bennett College .. .. .. 10
Cambridge Corr. College.. .. 42
Commercial Art .. .. .. 52
International Corr. Schools .. 22
Jack Sales Service .. .. 42
Linguaphone Institute .. .. 46
Metropolitan College .. .. 45
Modern Business Inst. .. .. 20
Pelman Institute .. .. .. 35
Pelman Languages Inst... .. 57
Pitman's School .. .. .. 70
Premier School of Journalism .. 56
Press Art School .. .. .. 43
Regent Institute .. .. 32 & 69
School of Accountancy .. .. 28
Schools and Colleges .. .. 57
Sloan-Duployan .. .. .. 48

**Food Products.**
Atora Beef Suet .. .. .. 58
Brown's Barley Kernels .. .. 68
Cheltine Foods .. .. .. 48
Chivers' Jellies .. .. .. 12
Foster Clark's Custard .. .. 50
Grape-Nuts .. .. .. 16
Hartley's Jams .. .. .. 9
Hovis Bread .. .. Cover 2
Lectona Nerve Food .. .. 26
Mason's O.K. Sauce .. .. 45
Ovaltine Tonic Food .. .. 13
Oxo .. .. .. .. 12
Post Toasties .. .. .. 8
Skipper Sardines .. .. Inset

**Fountain Pens, Etc.**
Waterman Pens .. .. .. 52

**Furniture and Furnishing.**
Allen's Cretonnes.. .. .. 17
Allen's Fadeless Durobelle .. 31
Chalco Curtain Runner .. .. 17
Foot's Adjustable Rest Chair .. 50
Globe Furnishing Co. .. .. 5
Jelks, W., & Sons.. .. .. 44
Minty Varsity Chair .. .. 39
Rhinos .. .. .. .. 34
Williamson & Cole, Ltd... .. 21
Woodhouse, J., & Son .. .. 60

**Gardening, Horticultural, Etc.**
Bayliss, Jones & Bayliss .. .. 32
Green, Thos., & Son .. .. 32

**Guns, Pistols, Etc.**
Midland Gun Co. .. .. .. 72

**Holiday Resorts, Etc.**
Blakes, Ltd. (Norfolk Broads) .. 74

**Hosiery, Etc.**
Cash's Woven Names .. .. 14
Fox's Puttees .. .. .. 47
Luvisca .. .. .. .. 59
Robinson & Cleaver (Collars) .. 26
St. Margaret Silk Hosiery .. 15
Van Heusen Collar .. .. 44

**Household Linens, Curtains, Lace, Etc.**
Hutton's Irish Linens .. .. 68

PAGE

**Household Requisites.**
Ashford, W. & G... .. .. 48
Chivers' Carpet Soap .. .. 48
Fluxite (Solder) .. .. .. 72
Goddard's Plate Powder.. .. 48
Johnson's Liquid Wax .. .. 65
Mansion Polish .. .. .. 63
National Ladders, Ltd. .. .. 72
"Nell Gwynn" Candles.. .. 19
Purimachos Fire Cement .. 48

**Hygienic and Surgical Appliances.**
Bailey's Elastic Stockings .. 69
B. L. Appliance Co. .. .. 70
Dr. Scholl's Foot Appliances .. 42
Electrological Inst. .. .. 47
Hill, D. & J. (Deaf) .. .. 69
H. S. Wales Co. (Sound Discs) .. 70
Lees Ray .. .. .. .. 48
O'Connor Extension Co... .. 49
"Oreillettes" Co. (Deaf) .. 48
Salmon Ody, Ltd. .. .. 54
Siltex Elastic Hosiery .. .. 30
Swift's Earlux .. .. .. 63
Trilety, M... .. .. .. 54
Wilson Ear-Drum .. .. 54

**Insurance, Etc.**
Confederation Life Assurance Inset

**Invalid Furniture, Appliances, Etc.**
Carter's Invalid Furniture .. 22
Foot's Wheel Chairs .. .. 36
Harding's Invalid Tricycles .. 40

**Jewellery.**
Bravingtons, Ltd. .. .. 26
Ciro Pearls .. .. .. 7
Northern Goldsmiths .. .. 48
Samuel, H., Ltd. .. .. .. 17

**Knitting and Sewing Machines, Etc.**
Foster, W. & J. .. .. .. 69

**Labour-Saving Appliances.**
Bradford's Washing Machine .. 54

**Medical.**
Alkia Saltrates .. .. .. 49
Allenbury's Pastilles .. Cover 2
Allied Merke Inst. .. .. 51
Burton, D. M. (Stammering) .. 48
Dinneford's Magnesia .. .. 58
Dr. Mackenzie's Smelling Bottle Cover 3
Ellis (Nervous) .. .. .. 48
Genasprin .. .. .. .. 36
Himrod's Asthma Cure .. .. 70
Holloway's Ointment .. .. 63
Hughes, F. S. (Stammering) .. 72
Humagsolan .. .. .. 49
Hystogene Inst. .. .. .. 50
Kruschen Salts .. .. .. 1
La-Mar Laboratories .. .. 70
Mothersill's Sensick Remedy .. 57
Radox Bath Salts .. .. 39
Reudel Bath Saltrates .. .. 71
Robinson, J., & Sons .. .. 70


*(Continued on Page 74.)*

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*(Continued from Page 73.)*

PAGE

Turvey Treatment Association .. 55
Urace Tablets .. .. .. 70
Woods, E. J. .. .. 50 & 70
Zox Powders .. .. .. 71

**Miscellaneous.**

Dennison Crepe .. .. .. 20
Fielding's "Newmatik" Cushion 50
Jordan, A. P., & Co. (Safes) .. 38

**Motor-Cycles, Cars, Launches, Etc.**

Douglas Motor Cycles .. .. 32
Royal Enfield Cycles .. .. 67
Salter Bros., Ltd. .. .. 40

**Musical.**

Billy Mayerl School .. .. 57
British School of Song-Writing .. 38
Hough, J. E., Ltd. (Handephon) 34
Macdonald Smith (Pianoforte Course) .. .. .. .. 69
Master Method of Memory-Playing .. .. .. .. 45

**Paint, Varnish, Etc.**

Club Black Enamel .. .. 52
Ripolin Paint .. .. .. 10

**Photography, Etc.**

Ensign Cameras and Films .. 10
Kodak Cameras .. .. .. 2
Rose, W. R. .. .. .. 20

**Physical Culture.**

Carne Inst. .. .. .. 54
Edison, S. M. .. .. .. 48
Girvan, A. .. .. .. .. 70
Strong, Melvin .. .. .. 70

**Publishers' Announcements.**

Adam, A. M., & Co. .. .. 71
Health Promotion, Ltd. .. .. 68

**Razors, Safety Razors, Etc.**

Clemak Blades .. .. .. 40
Clemak Shaving Brush .. .. 51
Mab Razor .. .. .. .. 55
"Valet" AutoStrop Safety Razor 4

**Soaps.**

Hudson's Soap .. .. .. 41
Lifebuoy Soap .. Back Cover
Lux .. .. .. .. .. 27
"Our Nell" Soap .. .. 19
Pears' Golden Glory Soap Inset

**Sports Requisites.**

Barnards, Ltd. (Tennis Courts) .. 52

**Stamps.**

Errington & Martin, Ltd. .. 56
Gibbons, Stanley, Ltd. .. .. 56
Sykes, Felix .. .. .. 56

**Stationery.**

Adana Printing Machine .. .. 46
Basildon Bond Notepapers .. 56
Brandauer Pens .. .. .. 72
Eldorado Pencils .. .. .. 48
Perry's Pens .. .. .. 30
Zanetic Pen-Copying Paper .. 46

**Tailors.**

PAGE

Aquascutum, Ltd. .. .. 43
Curzon Bros. .. .. .. 74
Groves & Lindley .. .. .. 34

**Toilet.**

Alexander's Shadeine .. .. 48
Amami Shampoo .. .. .. 35
Anzora .. .. .. .. 28
Ashes of Roses .. .. .. 6
Gibbs' Dentifrice .. .. Inset
Hinde's Hair Tint .. .. 18
Icilma Cream .. .. .. 5
Mercolized Wax .. .. .. 66
Nuctone .. .. .. .. 25
Oatine Cream .. .. Inset
Pepsodent .. .. .. .. 37
Pond's Cream .. .. .. 3
Shavex .. .. .. .. 28
Veet Cream .. .. .. 55
Zepto Antiseptic Pencil .. Cover 3

**Toys, Games, Models, Etc.**

Harbutt's Plasticine .. .. 34

**Typewriters and Accessories.**

Taylor's Typewriters .. .. 69

**Underwear.**

Celanese Underwear .. .. 31
Lee, S. (Belts and Corsets) .. 48
Luvisca .. .. .. .. 59
S. & S. Velvetex Corsets .. .. 18

**Waterproofs, Etc.**

Mattamac .. .. .. .. 29

**Wines, Spirits, Etc.**

Bulloch Lade Scotch Whisky .. 11


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